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# **The Open University**

**Exploring the contribution of informal  
learning to the professional development of  
school leaders in Cyprus**

**Andros K. Sofocleous Ed.D 2015**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the contributions of informal learning to the professional development of secondary school leaders in Cyprus. The research questions focus on the ways school leaders learn to lead, the contributions of informal learning to their professional development and the ways informal learning could be incorporated into a holistic professional development programme for school leaders.

The study uses an expanded Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design, in which priority is given to the qualitative aspect of the study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). First, interviews with educators with multiple leadership roles were implemented, followed by a survey using a questionnaire developed from the qualitative phase. After this, a new qualitative phase employing interviews with experienced headteachers was used as an evaluation stage, to confirm or not the findings from the previous phases.

The main findings reveal the ways in which secondary school leaders in Cyprus learn how to lead, namely through reflection, through a socialisation process, by sharing examples of good practice, by using informal apprenticeships, through incidental learning and through self-directed learning. Informal learning seems to facilitate the development of professional identity and school leaders' qualities/characteristics to address successfully the complexities of headship.

Moreover, this research study provides a discussion regarding the importance of the degree of formality in structuring learning processes, employing *The Formality-Informality Model*, and proposes a *Blended-Learning Model for the Professional Development of School Leaders*, which can guide the construction of a relevant professional development programme. This study further suggests that fostering a school leaders' community of practice (Wenger, 1998) could be a starting point for enhancing a leadership culture throughout the Cyprus Educational System. Finally, a *New Leadership Professional Development Framework for School Leaders in Cyprus* is proposed, which can facilitate the holistic professional development of secondary school leaders in Cyprus.



## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my wife Zoe, to my beloved daughters, Vasiliki and Maria, to my parents Kyriakos and Theonitsa, to whom I owe my existence, and to the memory of my friend Themistocles, an exceptional teacher.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would first like to thank God for the physical and mental capabilities I was given to overcome my personal and professional challenges, and pursue my family and study obligations.

There are also many people without whose support I would have never completed this thesis. My appreciation and gratitude goes to all participants in this study who willingly offered their own time and shared their valuable experiences with me. Without their help this study would not have been possible. I appreciate you and you have my endless respect.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	I
Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgements.....	III
Table of contents.....	IV
List of tables.....	VI
List of figures.....	VII
Declaration.....	VIII
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Background to the study.....	2
Setting the context: The Cyprus Educational System.....	6
Setting the context: The Secondary Education School Leaders’ Mandatory Professional Development Programme.....	10
Outline of research problem and research questions.....	17
Research design.....	18
The researcher: A personal perspective.....	21
Thesis structure.....	23
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	24
Introduction.....	24
Leaders and Leadership.....	25
Learning: Formal and Informal.....	44
Professional development of school leaders.....	66
Final remarks.....	77
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN.....	78
Introduction.....	78
Wider research framework.....	79
Paradigm worldview.....	83
Research methodology and design.....	86
Methods of data collection.....	95
Interviews.....	96
Survey: Questionnaire.....	99
Sampling strategy.....	100
Validity and reliability.....	104
Ethical issues entailed in the research.....	110
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH PROCESS.....	113
Introduction.....	113
Phase One: Initial and exploratory inquiry.....	113
Phase Two: Designing the questionnaire.....	116
Phase Three: Administering the questionnaire.....	121
Phase Four: Finalising the study.....	124
Sampling.....	125
Qualitative strand sample.....	125
Quantitative strand demographics.....	127
Data analysis – Procedure.....	131
Qualitative data analysis – Procedure.....	131
Quantitative data analysis – Procedure.....	134
CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	135
Introduction.....	135
Professional development of school leaders: Learning to lead.....	136
Learning to lead – Formal learning.....	137
Learning to lead – Informal learning.....	138

Building school leaders' professional identity.....	152
Leading role.....	153
Leaders' key qualities/characteristics.....	160
Macro-level politics.....	162
Criticism: The system.....	164
Criticism: The training.....	168
Suggestions for the future.....	172
Building leadership culture.....	172
School-based learning.....	175
School autonomy.....	176
Community of school leaders.....	177
Phase Three quantitative data results.....	178
Part A: Macro-level politics.....	179
Part B: Formal and informal learning development.....	181
Leading relationships.....	184
Leading decisions and crisis situations.....	185
Leading the organisation.....	187
Leading knowledge and understanding.....	188
Independent samples test and paired-samples t-test.....	190
Phase Four confirmatory qualitative data collection.....	191
Professional development of school leaders: Learning to lead.....	192
Learning to lead – Formal learning.....	192
Learning to lead – Informal learning.....	194
Building school leaders' professional identity.....	196
Leading role.....	196
Leaders' key qualities/characteristics.....	199
Macro-level politics.....	201
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	207
Introduction.....	207
Learning to lead.....	207
Contribution of informal learning.....	220
A holistic model of professional development for school leaders.....	228
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS.....	237
Introduction.....	237
Developing school leaders in Cyprus: Implications for policy.....	237
Contributions of the research.....	245
Implications for further research.....	247
Lessons learnt.....	248
Final reflections.....	250
REFERENCES.....	251
APPENDIX A: Informed consent form.....	274
APPENDIX B: Interview schedules.....	275
APPENDIX C: Scenarios used in Phase Two – Cycle C.....	282
APPENDIX D: Survey questionnaire.....	284
APPENDIX E: Analysis of Interviews.....	288
APPENDIX F: Translation examples.....	297
APPENDIX G: Qualities/Characteristics revealed from Phase One.....	298
APPENDIX H: Paired samples test.....	299
APPENDIX I: Quotations regarding qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders – Phase Two – Cycle C.....	301
APPENDIX J: Origin of pseudonyms.....	312

## List of tables

<b>Table 3.1</b>	Knowledge provinces in the field of school leadership.....	81
<b>Table 4.3:</b>	Interviewees' ranking of twenty-one key qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders in Cyprus.....	118
<b>Table 4.4:</b>	Distribution of statements in the questionnaire.....	120
<b>Table 4.5:</b>	The structure of Part B of the questionnaire.....	121
<b>Table 4.6:</b>	Sample for qualitative strand.....	126
<b>Table 4.7:</b>	Gender.....	127
<b>Table 4.8:</b>	Age.....	128
<b>Table 4.9:</b>	Years as a Headteacher.....	128
<b>Table 4.10:</b>	Academic Qualifications.....	129
<b>Table 4.11:</b>	National profile of the Cypriot Headteachers.....	130
<b>Table 4.12:</b>	Themes and categories emerging from data.....	133
<b>Table 5.1:</b>	Pseudonyms.....	136
<b>Table 5.2:</b>	Key qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders in Cyprus separated into professional identities and technical skills.....	161
<b>Table 5.3:</b>	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient.....	179
<b>Table 5.4:</b>	Difference between means of Informal versus Formal of Key Qualities/Characteristics of School leaders in Cyprus.....	182

## List of figures

<b>Figure 1.1:</b>	A three-phase Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design.....	20
<b>Figure 1.2:</b>	A four-phase Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design.....	20
<b>Figure 4.1:</b>	A Cycle of Interviews.....	113
<b>Figure 4.2:</b>	A procedural diagram of the exploratory sequential mixed methods design used for the study.....	115
<b>Figure 5.5:</b>	Leading Relationships.....	184
<b>Figure 5.6:</b>	Leading decisions and crisis situations.....	186
<b>Figure 5.7:</b>	Leading the organisation.....	187
<b>Figure 5.8:</b>	Leading Knowledge and Understanding.....	189
<b>Figure 6.1:</b>	Conceptual Framework. The Iceberg Metaphor: Formal and Informal Learning.....	230
<b>Figure 6.2:</b>	The Formality - Informality Model.....	234
<b>Figure 6.3:</b>	The Blended-Learning Model for the Professional Development of School Leaders.....	235
<b>Figure 7.1:</b>	New Leadership Professional Development Framework for School Leaders in Cyprus.....	239

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It has not been submitted for a degree or other qualification to The Open University or any other university or institution for examination.

# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

## **Introduction**

This thesis presents a research project aimed to enhance knowledge and understanding in relation to the professional development of secondary school leaders in the Cyprus Educational System. More particularly, the present study aims to investigate how these school leaders learn to lead by exploring the possible contributions of informal learning which is stemming from the field. Consequently, this study intends to inform policy makers of the potential of informal learning in supporting secondary education school leaders' learning how to lead. The impetus for this investigation emerged from the emphasis given by the Cyprus government to deliver professional development programmes dominated by formal learning activities. Criticisms at a local level (Michaelidou and Pashiardis, 2009) seem to indicate that such efforts might have paid insufficient attention to the contributions of informal learning to a holistic professional development for school leaders.

For the purposes of this study the term 'school leader' is used to mean both 'headteacher' and 'principal'. Furthermore, in this study 'novice' headteachers are defined as those who are in their first year in headship, whereas from the second year and thereafter they are considered as experienced headteachers. This is done in parallel to



the Cyprus Educational System, which provides an induction programme to headteachers only during their first year in post.

This chapter begins by presenting a brief background to the present research study. These discussions form the basis for identifying the outlined research problem. Then, two sections are introduced setting the scene for: (i) an overview of the Cyprus Educational System and, (ii) an overview of the mandatory professional development programme offered to the secondary education school leaders in Cyprus. This is followed by a section introducing the research approach employed and the research questions. The personal perspective of the researcher is presented next. Finally, an outline of the thesis structure describing the contents of the remaining chapters is given.

## **Background to the study**

There is an agreement between educational reformers and researchers on the significant role of school leaders as the key agents of change and improvement (Retallick and Fink, 2002). Gunter (2001) argues that this has strengthened school leadership's profile in changing education.

Although there is not a widely accepted single definition of leadership (Hoy and Miskel, 2001), researchers tend to agree that "leadership in an organization is one of the few ideas in the literature on change

about which there is consistent agreement” (Fink, 2005, p. 3) in relation to its significance. Despite the variety of definitions on leadership, the agreement on its importance has led practitioners and policy makers in raising expectations of school leaders’ role in driving forward school reforms. Also, school leaders are expected to lead their schools to success and, simultaneously, to promote pupils’ and teachers’ learning (Dempster, 2009). If school leaders are successful in what they do then they will achieve in “creating schools of tomorrow” (Southworth, 2005, p. 158). As the school leaders’ role seems to be particularly significant, promoting them to lifelong-learners is too important to be left to chance. In realising the above, school leaders’ professional development has been a priority for educational systems internationally, but “leadership preparation and development is by no means uniform in definition or practice throughout the world” (Lumby et al., 2008, p. 3).

Internationally, different structural and contextual elements are used for the professional development of school leaders (Lumby et al., 2008; Weindling and Dimmock, 2006). Most of these approaches involve the completion of university courses, academic degrees, governmental licensure and training programmes in formal settings, many times before applying for a leadership position (Gronn, 1999; Gunter, 2001; Lumby et al., 2008). However, at the heart of these professional programmes is “the purpose of learning [itself] and whether it is instrumental or technical” (Gunter, 2001, p. 88). This realisation has led professional development providers to develop a

number of training activities and programmes addressed to school leaders at various career stages. The way school leaders learn impacts the development of these programmes. Since learning is not an individualistic act, it also seems to influence school leaders' professional development activities (Beatty, 2008).

According to Eraut (2000, p. 130) "learning is always situated in a particular context which comprises not only a location and a set of activities in which knowledge either contributes or is embedded, but also a set of social relations which give rise to those activities". Schools and leaders are "embedded in the particular society [they] have to cope with, to support or to react to the social, economic and cultural changes" (Huber and Pashiardis, 2008, p. 176). Therefore, there is a need "for strategies [...] and tactics which help leaders become informed readers of their schools' macro- and micro-contexts" (Dempster, 2009, p. 30). School leaders are both agents of learning and agents of leadership; therefore, they "need to learn and [they] learn as they lead" (Swaffield and Macbeath, 2013, p. 9). Wenger (1998) argues that learning is a process of social participation in communities of practice, in which participation refers to an "encompassing process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities" (Wenger, 1998, p. 4, emphasis in original). Furthermore, participation "is both a kind of action and a form of belonging" which "shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do" (Wenger, 1998, p. 4).

Learning is a contextually bound process which does not occur in isolation. Gunter (2001, p. 88) stresses that issues like “what is to be learned and how adults in professional roles learn” need to be addressed. She further stresses that this is set within a time when formal learning processes have been subject to criticism across the educational systems regarding the type, the quality and the effectiveness of leadership preparation courses (Gunter, 2001). Importantly, school leaders’ learning activities have been criticised for an over-reliance on formal learning rather than searching for a balance between formal and informal formats of learning (Coffield, 2000). When school leaders practice leadership, they form new understandings of the work and create new knowledge (Dempster, 2009). Interaction with colleagues, students, parents and other stakeholders in school events support the way school leaders learn to lead. The learning acquired by doing, can be defined as “informal learning”. Informal learning is explored in detail in Chapter Two.

As MacBeath (2009, p. 13) argues “the stimulus to move beyond what we currently know, or think we know, may come from the scaffolding of teachers, but also from peers, parents or from our own psychological need to achieve, to know more, to do it better”. Apparently, emphasising formal approaches for school leaders’ development outside the school environment does not seem to acknowledge the dynamics of informal learning. Coffield (2000, p. 8) suggests that “informal learning should no longer be regarded as an

inferior form of learning whose main purpose is to act as the precursor of formal learning; it needs to be seen as fundamental, necessary and valuable in its own right". Consequently, those engaged in developing professional development programmes should consider both disciplines as equally important.

## **Setting the context: The Cyprus Educational System**

This study is set in Cyprus and it researches secondary education school leaders' professional development. The role of school leaders in the Cyprus Educational System has become more complex and demanding over the past few years (Pashiardis et al., 2012; Nicolaidou et al., 2013). This is mostly because of demands arising as a consequence of an ongoing educational reform dated back to 2004 and new curricula partially introduced in the school year 2010 – 2011 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2010). The changing demographics of the school population because of increased economic and political immigration levels, the increase of parental and government expectations for increased performance levels and accountability (Pashiardis et al., 2012), make the headteacher's role, particularly demanding (Weindling and Dimmock, 2006).

Currently, the main structural characteristics that underpin the education system in Cyprus are (i) the centralisation of powers, and (ii) the seniority found within the system (Pashiardis, 2004b). Pashiardis et al. (2011, p. 537) state that "educational administration

in the Cypriot educational system is highly centralized and bureaucratic". Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011a, p. 723) stress that "since its foundation in 1960, the Cypriot state has kept control of the National Curriculum, guided educational policy and rested all powers in the hands of the Ministry". Everything is decided centrally and power has a top-down direction. Headteachers are required to implement all directives sent by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Furthermore, the headteachers are not responsible for the school budget (except in vocational education), for curriculum decisions, initiatives or resources. Staff appointments are also decided centrally.

Pashiardis (2004b) claims there is no selection process and no professional selection criteria for school leaders in Cyprus. He argues that selection in leadership positions is based on seniority and years in post. Decisions on promotion to headteachers are made by the Educational Service Commission which takes into consideration the years of service, the evaluation grades, and the grades the candidates are granted in a personal interview (Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011b). Diplomas and degrees or other academic credentials (Thody et al., 2007) are also considered. The primary source, however, is their years of service (Michaelidou and Pashiardis, 2009). There is a paradox here. Teachers' evaluation grades most of the time ascend in a parallel line with the years of service; as a result, those teachers who have served the Cyprus Educational System for more years than others are expected to be the ones to be promoted first (Sophocleous,

2014). Thus, seniority promotion comes as a reward of the “loyalty of the people to the system” (Michaelidou and Pashiardis, 2009, p. 404).

There are three tiers of leadership posts in secondary schools in Cyprus. School headteachers are on tier one. Headteachers in Cypriot schools rise to the post following a promotion after having served in middle leadership posts for a set number of years. On tier two, immediately below the headteacher, one can find the deputy-alpha-heads. These are aspiring headteachers who need to serve as deputy-alpha-heads for a minimum of one year before becoming eligible to apply for headship. They serve for a minimum of three years as deputy-heads on tier three before becoming eligible to apply for deputy-alpha-head's position. One may apply to become a deputy-head once s/he has served for a minimum of eleven years as a teacher.

Deputy-alpha-heads are assigned by their headteacher in charge of one or more of the following three domains: (a) as ‘Pedagogical Counsellor’, (b) as manager of the ‘Sector of Education’, and (c) as manager of the programme called ‘Action-Creativity-Social Contribution’. Deputy-heads during their service are assigned by their headteacher a number of administrative and discipline duties, such as coordinating a programme or an initiative, checking for the implementation of the school regulations and informing parents of discipline issues.

Eventually, in most of the cases teachers are promoted to a leadership position – as deputy-heads or deputy-alpha-heads or headteachers – with only a few years ahead of them before retirement, which is at the age of sixty three. This was particularly prominent with headteachers who were promoted in 2012 (in 2013 there were no promotions due to the economic crisis) having only three years of service left, since the oldest person promoted was at the age of sixty (Educational Service Commission, Annual Report, 2012). Gronn and Ribbins (2003, p. 85) state that:

“Cyprus has opted for gerontocratic formation arrangements. That is, the most significant cultural answer it provides to the problem of how to form educational leaders is to reward very long apprenticeships, patience, queuing and turn-taking. There is, of course, ample historical precedent in various locations around the globe for relying on the good sense, wisdom and sagacious leadership of the elderly.”

Despite the positive “wisdom and sagacious leadership” (Gronn and Ribbins, 2003) mentioned above, gerontocracy generates a debate on the short period left for service, which is considered as an important limitation for lengthy improvement initiatives (Pashiardis, 2004a; Nicolaidou and Georgiou, 2009). Moreover, disagreements rise in regards to what kind of school leaders the society would like to have



in charge of leading public schools (Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011a). Another critique concerns the current evaluation system, which is based on legislation introduced in 1976. Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011b, p. 724) claim that the “anachronistic policy of the evaluation procedures has led to a dysfunctioning of the whole educational system”. There is an agreement from almost everyone in education in Cyprus that the evaluation system is dysfunctional (Sophocleous, 2013; Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011b). Also, the Athena Consortium, an independent organisation, developed a proposal for a new evaluation system in 2006. Despite these attempts, the evaluation system remains unchanged (Sophocleous, 2013) regardless of the continuing dialogue between the interested parties. The reasons which have left the evaluation system in its current form without any significant change are related to: (i) the inflexibility of the bureaucratic educational system, and (ii) the opposition from the Teachers’ Union (Pashiardis, 2004a)

### **Setting the context: The secondary education school leaders’ mandatory professional development programme**

All professional development programmes for school leaders in Cyprus are offered by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute which is the governmental training centre for educational staff in general, in the absence of a leadership academy. The secondary education professional programme is offered to newly appointed headteachers and deputy-heads following promotion (Ministry of Education and

Culture: Pedagogical Institute, 2010), whereas deputy-alpha-heads are not offered any training. The programmes are offered once a week during working hours for a period of seven – eight months, for a total of twenty-two meetings. These programmes are funded by 25% from national funds and by 75% from European funds (Christofidou, personal communication, 6 April 2014).

The current form of the secondary education professional development programme was introduced in 2007. Before that the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute used to organise a few informative meetings after promotion (Christofidou, personal communication, 6 April 2014), but mainly, teachers were trained to become headteachers through an informal apprenticeship model (Pashiardis, 1997). He states that the school leaders possessed “many different leadership styles that they learn ‘on the job’ in a rather unofficial, unstructured and haphazard ‘apprenticeship’ model” (Pashiardis, 1997, p. 276). Since 2007 induction programmes for deputy-heads and for headteachers are offered after promotion. Sophocleous (2014) argues that the deputy-heads’ programme could not be perceived as a preparation programme for the aspirant headteachers, because this programme seems to have narrow aims focusing mainly on the deputy’s role and duties. Moreover, he claims that there is no leadership development framework to support the above mentioned programmes, so as to enhance the holistic development of the headteachers.

The impact of the secondary school leaders' mandatory professional development programme is highly criticised. Nicolaidou and Georgiou (2009, p. 168) argue that the school leaders' professional development programme in Cyprus is still in an "embryonic stage"; this translates in the continuous changes of its content between 2009 and 2013 (these are presented in detail below). Pashiardis (2004b) is also critical of the lack of leadership culture throughout the educational system; this impacts the delivered training, and consequently, the development of successful school leaders. He argues that there is a "non-existing system of leaders' selection and preparation [which] can be seen as the black hole of the Cyprus education system" (Pashiardis, 2004b, p. 664). Furthermore, Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011a, p. 75) in their evaluation of the programmes argue that there is "absence of specific competences and skills that the training programmes should be aiming to develop" which is considered as a barrier. Moreover, they claim that the effectiveness of the training programmes has not been evaluated (Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011b). The focus of the scarce evaluation conducted is on the participants' satisfaction and to collect suggestions for improvement of the training (Christofidou, personal communication, 6 April 2014).

Between 2009 and 2013 there have been some significant changes in the headteachers' programme as far as the topics of each module and the delivery format are concerned. In 2009 four modules were taught, namely:

- (i) Introduction to educational management and organisation;
- (ii) School leadership;
- (iii) Evaluation and development for school improvement; and
- (iv) Administration and best practices.

(Ministry of Education and Culture: Pedagogical Institute, 2009)

In 2010 the modules were increased to six including:

- (i) Introductory meetings prior to the start of the new school year;
- (ii) The yearly school calendar;
- (iii) Instructional leadership;
- (iv) Designing improvement and evaluation for school development;
- (v) Educational Reform Act; and
- (vi) General pedagogy and school organisation.

(Ministry of Education and Culture: Pedagogical Institute, 2010)

The duration of the programme remained the same. It is important to note that the modules had a different duration depending on the estimated significance of each module. More changes were introduced in 2010 with the addition of meetings with inspectors from the Ministry of Education and Culture prior to being allocated to a particular school. These meetings take place at the end of each school year. The focus of these meetings is on procedural issues allowing thus for the focus of the formal training to be placed on instructional leadership, school self-evaluation and action planning for improvement. These initiatives could eventually move schools to more decentralised practices (Pashiardis, 2004a). Moreover,

curriculum reform changes stressed the need to offer a module to inform the headteachers of these changes.

In 2011 the programme was redesigned. Although the modules remained six, their titles changed to:

- (i) Beginning of the new school year: a smooth start;
- (ii) School improvement;
- (iii) School organisation and administration;
- (iv) Development of school culture and climate;
- (v) Professional development of human resources; and
- (vi) Promotion of teaching and learning.

(Ministry of Education and Culture: Pedagogical Institute, 2011)

The most significant change observed in 2011 is the recognition of the need for a more practical nature of the training: lectures are now supported by school visits, on site observations, a leader's portfolio of achievements from their induction phase and by sharing examples of good practice from experienced headteachers. These changes were adopted as a result of suggestions from the participants in the training (Christofidou, personal communication, 6 April 2014) and following a programme evaluation by Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011a).

In the years 2012 and 2013 (Ministry of Education and Culture: Pedagogical Institute, 2012; 2013) significant changes were made only in relation to: (i) the introduction in 2012 of an online platform,

used mostly as an uploading webpage of instructional material despite the original supposition for the development of an online community of practice (Nicolaidou et al., 2013), and (ii) the introduction in 2013 of a mentoring scheme grouping 4-5 novice headteachers with an experienced headteacher, which is seen as a chance for the novice headteachers to spend a whole day at the mentor's school in order to discuss the daily leadership practice of the headteacher. Ten experienced headteachers were assigned as mentors by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Novice headteachers were grouped with mentors under two criteria: (i) geographical position of their school and the mentor's school, and (ii) the type of school they serve: middle or high school (Christofidou, personal communication, 6 April 2014).

Mentors received half-a-day training from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute on mentoring strategies and they were given an agenda with the subjects to discuss during the sessions as a starting point. They were also told to feel free to move away from the agenda listening to their mentees' needs (Christofidou, personal communication, 6 April 2014). Four visits to the mentors' schools were planned out of a total of twenty-two compulsory meetings for the completion of the programme (Nicolaidou et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, a main criticism rises in relation to the design of the programmes irrespective of the needs of either the individuals or the system. As Nicolaidou and Petridou claim, the training programmes

“offer what is available rather than what they should be focusing on” (Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011b, p. 736). In parallel, Michaelidou and Pashiardis (2009) highlight the importance of a needs analysis when designing in-service training programmes, which as they argue, is not the case currently in Cyprus. Participants in previous evaluations expressed that they would like to participate in the designing of the programme and argue that they would have preferred this training to involve their schools avoiding overreliance on theoretical approaches (Michaelidou and Pashiardis, 2009; Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011a; Nicolaidou et al., 2013).

The above seem to reinforce the view that the provision of professional development for school leaders in Cyprus lacks a holistic approach. Currently, the training offered is based on formal activities held outside schools irrespective of their needs; the group mentoring scheme was only recently introduced (2013-2014). Furthermore, there are a number of criticisms as indicated previously including the fact that there are no formal apprenticeship models developed and that the training programme seems to be under a continuous reconstruction for no obvious reason; one can argue that this is due to the lack of a holistic approach to leadership development as discussed above. Moreover, the training is offered after appointment, with no significant pre-post preparation. In addition, there is no continuous professional development for the experienced leaders after the induction programme. These are just a few of the issues arising from the field regarding the development of Cypriot school leaders.

## **Outline of research problem and research questions**

In light of the absence of a holistic professional development framework for school leaders in Cyprus, the question arises on the way school leaders in Cyprus might benefit from a holistic approach to leadership development with a focus on the practice of leadership in schools.

There is a considerable gap in leadership development in Cyprus stemming from the lack of leadership culture all the way throughout the system. Previous criticisms seem to suggest that formal training alone is inadequate to provide sufficient learning if the aim is to develop leaders holistically, not only in technical issues and strategies, but to have an impact on their personality, their beliefs and values, their inner self (Zimmerman, 2011; Törnsén, 2010; Pashiardis et al., 2012).

If the intention remains on how best to develop school leaders in Cyprus, then there is a need to build a holistic professional development programme, which will include every aspect of learning activity and learning event appropriate to develop individuals, which will acknowledge the importance of developing leadership at all stages of a professional's career. Therefore, the need arises to reconsider the design of the professional development programme for



secondary education school leaders; steps forward should consider focusing on the school leader not just as an individual but as a participant in a community of practice (Wenger, 1998).

In light of the above, the key research questions that this thesis sets out to investigate are the following:

- In what ways do school leaders learn how to lead?
- In what ways can informal learning contribute to the professional development of school leaders?
- In what ways could informal learning be incorporated into a holistic model of school leaders' professional development programme?

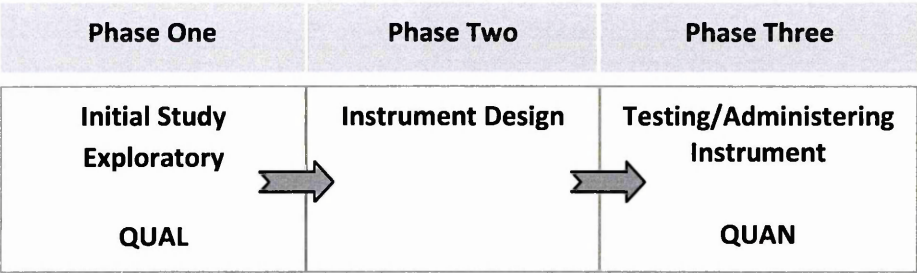
## **Research design**

In order to address the outlined research questions, this thesis is located within the humanistic approach (Gunter and Ribbins, 2003). The humanistic province in the field of school leadership is “concerned with gathering and theorising from the experiences and biographies of those who are leaders” (Gunter and Ribbins, 2003, p. 133). Therefore, this study investigates secondary education school leaders' learning to lead in Cyprus by drawing on their learning experiences, on how they understand their professional role and how they view the social context they work in. The study also reports on

the ways they learn how to lead and in what ways this learning could facilitate the learning of others in the same field.

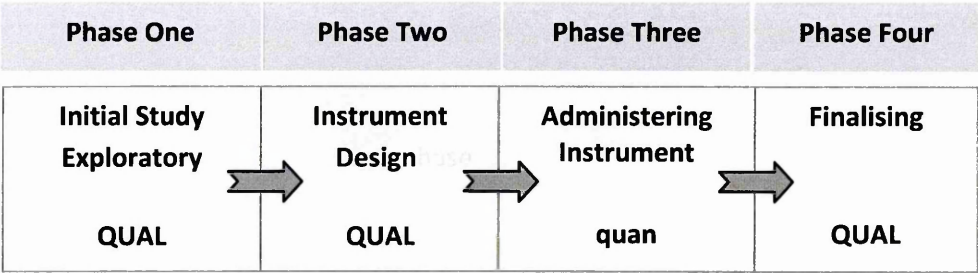
Moreover, this study is premised in Habermas's (1971) practical interest. It is embedded in an interpretive viewpoint since its aim is to understand the perceptions and experiences of Cypriot secondary education school leaders on the way they learn how to lead. Furthermore, the notion of learning as a situated activity through *legitimate peripheral participation* processes draws the attention to the active participation of learners in communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) recognising the social and cultural role of existing practitioners in supporting new practitioners to grow into a community of practice and develop from novices to competent leaders.

This research study used an Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011) in which the priority is given to the qualitative aspect of the study (Creswell, 2003). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2006, p. 21) argue that "Sequential Mixed Designs are designs in which there are at least two strands that occur chronologically (QUAN-QUAL or QUAL- QUAN)". Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 187) argue that "in some exploratory designs, a three-phase model is in use when the initial, exploratory phase is followed by an instrument design phase, and then a phase testing and administering the instrument" (see Figure 1.1).



**Figure 1.1:** A three-phase Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design  
Abbreviations: ‘QUAL’ stands for Qualitative and ‘QUAN’ stands for Quantitative.  
(Adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011)

For the purposes of this study a fourth phase was added (see Figure 1.2) developing the Creswell and Plano Clark model (2011). The fourth phase included further qualitative data collection and was employed to give the researcher the opportunity to address findings and results from the previous phases. Furthermore, the purpose was to check for consistency of tentative conclusions and to locate what the missing element in school leaders’ holistic development in Cyprus could possibly be.



**Figure 1.2:** A four-phase Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design  
Abbreviations: ‘QUAL’ stands for Qualitative and ‘quan’ stands for Quantitative.  
Capitals are used to denote the more dominant method.

## **The researcher: A personal perspective**

My aspiration as a practitioner is to extend my knowledge and understanding of the field of the professional development of secondary school leaders in Cyprus. Working within the system for twenty-one years I have gained significant experience on how the system works and how things are done in schools in Cyprus. My teaching journey began in 1993 at a small primary school with twenty pupils, where I taught for two years. Since I was the only teacher I was, consequently, in charge of the management of the school. Too small as a school, but still too big for my experiences at that time; the challenge was high. This was the first shock in my professional life, and there were more to come. A significant curve in my leadership journey was the year 2009 when I was proposed by my school inspector to take over the position of the subject leader at my school, in the absence of a deputy-head. Of course, as an aspirant leader myself, I accepted the challenge.

Moreover I was engaged in numerous projects as a coordinator, I was involved in almost every improvement initiative that my schools undertook, including advancing reading and writing skills, promoting the socialisation of special needs students, and in several European programmes, including Socrates/Comenius projects either for environmental issues or for students' democratic citizenship issues. These shifted my role from being a classroom teacher into the broader role of a teacher leader. This stance led me to build trusting

relationships with most of my headteachers (fifteen headteachers in twenty-one years of professional life), which allowed honest discussions and sharing. The complexity of the role and the demanding issues these headteachers faced was what triggered me to apply in 2003 for a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership at the University of Cyprus. I thought at that time that studying formally would solve all my concerns in the field of school management. On the contrary, this experience created new insights which led me to decide to engage myself into more research in the field of leadership and eventually apply for the Educational Doctorate from The Open University.

I believe that formal professional development is valuable for the individual and, at best, leads to successful schools and improved student outcomes, or, at worst, it minimises the negative impact of the school leader. The debate moves to which type of professional development should be employed if the aim is to build the most successful professional development programme for school leaders in Cyprus. I believe that the missing link lies in the field where leaders exercise leadership. Moreover, it is my view that context and culture matter and it is worth to explore how leaders and leadership practice are influenced by the centralisation of the educational system and the current provision of the programme. With these in mind, I set out to enhance understanding of how leaders learn how to lead and in what ways informal learning can contribute to their development.

## Thesis structure

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One, *Introduction*, introduces the subject area, sets the scene in the Cyprus Educational System, summarises the literature which has influenced this study and the chosen research methodology, and presents the personal perspectives of the researcher. Chapter Two, *Literature Review*, discusses the literature focusing on leadership and on the successful leader, formal and informal learning and professional development of school leaders. Chapter Three, *Research Design*, explains the research design of the study to locate and justify the research approach taken. It includes the wider framework, the paradigm worldview, the research methodology and design, the methods of data collection, the sampling strategy, the ethical issues, and discussion about validity and reliability. Chapter Four, *Research Process*, considers the research process through the four phases of the exploratory sequential design. It consists also of the sampling and qualitative and quantitative procedures. Chapter Five, *Presentation of Findings*, presents the findings of this research study. In Chapter Six, *Discussion of the Findings*, the discussion of the findings and results from this mixed method study are presented. Finally, *Conclusions* come in Chapter Seven. Also, implications of the findings are discussed and suggestions for further research are put forward.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

In an era of continuous change and high levels of expectations from the society (Pashiardis and Brauckmann, 2008) school leaders are struggling to lead successfully. For such a task to be accomplished an emphasis on learning to lead becomes imperative. School leaders should have the potential not only to manage change, but also to create change (Fullan, 2005). Learning how to best approach change is thus of great importance. School leaders as lifelong-learners should lead others into becoming learners (West-Burnham, 2009); they should be highly committed and share commitment with teachers, students and parents; they have to be highly passionate and share their passion; they have to be visionaries and share their vision creating capacity for sustainable change and progress (Fullan, 2005). Consequently, they have to be exceptional leaders and distribute leadership through-out the school and the society so as to create and develop communities of leaders (Wenger, 2009).

These leaders are developed through a socialisation process of different roles throughout their personal and professional lives (Gronn, 1999). Wenger (1998, p. 229) points out that “one can design roles, but one cannot design the identities that will be constructed through these roles. One can design visions, but one cannot design

the allegiance necessary to align energies behind those visions”. Subsequently, designing leadership programmes to correspond to leaders’ roles will support the development of successful leaders in schools. It needs more than just training to develop leaders’ identities, to construct beliefs, values and assumptions.

Therefore, in this chapter the complex terrain of school leadership, the crucial role of the school leaders and what a successful school leader is are presented first. Next, formal and informal learning are presented to situate both terms in the field and between them, with emphasis in learning theories and community of practice, and finally, professional development and the importance of the development of school leaders to succeed are presented.

## **Leaders and Leadership**

It is well accepted that leadership is one of the determinant factors of successful organisations (Fullan, 2005; Retallick and Fink, 2002). Dinham (2005, p. 340) points out that “there can be little doubt [...] that leadership is important in developing effective, innovative schools and in facilitating quality teaching and learning”. Nevertheless, despite the fact that they support the greatness of the field, Allix and Gronn (2005) discuss the elusiveness of leadership, which remains notoriously perplexing. They argue that “despite a long history of interest and fascination, and a relatively shorter history of systematic investigation, the phenomenon that is referred



to as 'leadership' remains in large part a theoretical enigma and paradox" (Allix and Gronn, 2005, p. 181).

### *Administration, management and leadership*

A debate is supported by the perplexity created by the use of the different terms to describe school headship: administration, management and leadership. Bush (2008, p. 272) argues that "the concepts of management and leadership overlap each other and with the related notion of administration". However, despite this, and as Hoy and Miskel (2001, p. 393) argue, "no one suggests that administering or managing and leading schools are equivalent". In addition, Gronn (1999, p. 4) argues that "leadership, by contrast, is a qualitatively different function from both management and administration". Cuban (1988) gave a great distinction between leadership and management, arguing that leadership links with change while management is seen as a maintenance act. Hoy and Miskel (2001) agree with Cuban, stating that "administrators emphasize stability and efficiency, whereas leaders stress adaptive change and getting people to agree about what needs to be accomplished" (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 393).

### *Defining leadership*

Defining leadership is a complex act. Different scholars give different definitions to conceptualise the phenomenon. Cuban (1988, p. xx) states that, "by leadership, I mean influencing others' action in

achieving desirable ends”. Influence is also mentioned by Hoy and Miskel (2001, p. 394):

“Leadership is a social process in which a member of a group or organization influences the interpretation of internal and external events, the choice of goals or desired outcomes, organization of work activities, individual motivation and abilities, power relations, and shared orientations.”

Likewise, Bush (2011) refers to leadership as a process of influence giving emphasis to ‘values’ and ‘vision’. He argues that:

“Leadership can be understood as a process of influence based on clear values and beliefs and leading to a ‘vision’ for the school. The vision is articulated by leaders who seek to gain the commitment of staff and stakeholders to the ideal of a better future for the school, its students and stakeholders.” (Bush, 2011, p. 198)

What could be an addition to the above is “the variability and uniqueness of the context in which leadership is exercised” (Gronn, 1999, p. 3). It is what Dimmock and Walker (2005, p. 3) argue about stating that “leadership is a culturally and contextually bounded process [...] it is inextricably intertwined with its larger environment

at levels ranging from the organizational, to local community through to larger society". Allix and Gronn (2005, p.188) support further that "theory building should be contextualized, because much in the way of human knowledge that is of interest to leadership research is implicit knowledge".

### *Leadership models: influence, values and vision*

Following the discussion above regarding what is 'leadership' in education, scholars tried to come closer to an understanding of the phenomenon through the categorisation of different leadership models (Leithwood et al., 1999; Bush and Glover, 2003; 2014). Bush and Glover (2014) argue that even if the described models are 'ideal types' and each of them is 'partial' in unfolding what actually is happening in the leadership practice, leadership theory is of great importance for two reasons: "it provides a way of understanding and interpreting the actions of leaders", and second, because "understanding theory provides a guide to leadership practice for principals and other leaders" (Bush and Glover, 2014, p. 565).

Bush and Glover (2014), building on the work of Leithwood et al. (1999) and Bush (2011), propose nine leadership models, which are considered explanatory, even though there are alternative and competing models of school leadership elsewhere. These models are: instructional leadership, managerial leadership, transformational leadership, moral and authentic leadership, distributed leadership,

teacher leadership, system leadership and contingent leadership. These nine leadership models are presented briefly below.

*Instructional leadership* presupposes a focus on teaching in order to enhance the effectiveness of teachers' classroom practices. It differs from other models in focusing on the direction than the process of leadership. This model was "modified and rebadged as 'leadership for learning'" (Bush and Glover, 2014, p. 566). *Managerial leadership* places the emphasis on functions, tasks and behaviours so as to ensure efficient completion of specific tasks by employees and *transformational leadership* features building commitments and capacities of organisational members, elevating members' self-centered attitudes, values and beliefs. *Moral leadership* and *authentic leadership* place the emphasis on integrity, and assume that the critical focus of leadership should be on the values, beliefs and ethics of leaders themselves (Leithwood et al., 1999; Beatty, 2008; Bush and Glover, 2003; 2014; Gunter, 2001).

All above models are essentially about individual leadership, usually headteachers' leadership. Several other approaches focus on collective, rather than singular leadership. *Distributed leadership*, as a shared approach to leadership, involves a focus on the ways decisions are made (Bush, 2011). It "highlights leadership as an *emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals*", "suggests *openness of the boundaries of leadership*" (Bennett et al., 2003, p. 7, emphasis in original) and "concentrates on

engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role” (Harris, 2004, p. 13). *Teacher leadership* involves “people who have a major part of their work based in the classroom but seek to work collectively with their colleagues outside it to shape school policy” (Busher, 2006, p. 48). There are clear links between teacher leadership and distributed leadership since “it is difficult to imagine distributed leadership becoming embedded in schools without teacher leaders” (Bush, 2014, p. 562). *System leadership* is another shared leadership approach. It involves school leaders in networks or clusters with other school leaders beyond their own school, closely connected with them, so as to provide solutions for underperforming schools or work together to support reform initiatives for improvement through collaborative leadership. Lastly, *contingent leadership* emphasizes context, recognising the need of adapting different leadership styles to particular situations (Bush, 2011).

In an endeavour to come closer to a better understanding of leadership, Bush (2011) suggests to incorporate in the discussion the following leadership dimensions: influence, values and vision. Therefore, these dimensions are discussed below through the different leadership models, so as to investigate in depth the issue of leadership.

Many leadership definitions include the social process of influence as one of the core aspects (see pp. 26-27). *Influence* is a dimension of

power, which stems from personal qualities, professional knowledge and the nature of the interpersonal relationships constructed in schools; the other form of power is *authority*, which arises from formal status of senior leadership staff (Busher, 2006). Busher (2006) claims that:

“power is the means not only by which people assert their preferred values and choices over those of other people, but also the means by which they prevent other people making choices or, indeed, challenge the choices that have already been implemented”.

(Busher, 2006, p. 34)

Anderson (2004) reports that in a distributed leadership perspective when the formal leader decides to exclude some individuals from leadership roles, reducing the distribution of decision-making and of teacher leadership in their schools, then the remaining formal teacher leaders might “tend to reflect administrative leadership biases and managerial roles rather than instructional or transformational” (Anderson, 2004, p. 111). Therefore, the school leader’s influence might create hierarchies between teachers, which will have a negative effect in the school’s life.

Furthermore, Bush and Glover (2014, p. 558) argue that despite the fact that the transformational model is comprehensive providing a normative approach to school leadership, it can be criticised “as being

a vehicle for control over teachers, through requiring adherence to the leader's values". Criticism to singular leadership models, such as the instructional and the managerial, argues that since the formal leader is the centre of power and authority in the school it is more likely to intend to pass her/his own values to the rest of the school staff or/and the values which come directly from the government (Bush, 2011; Bush and Glover, 2014), especially in a conservative and centralised system, such as the Cyprus Educational System (Pashiardis, 2004a). Consequently, Busher (2006, p. 35) argues that leaders should "be aware of and negotiate with the expectations held of them by their colleagues and students, as well as of those held by senior staff in a school, if they are to gain and retain the consent of the people with whom they are working".

In a shared leadership culture, such as in a distributed leadership perspective, there is a negotiation between collective values of all the members of the school community, leading to shared and acceptable values, which help to construct the culture of the organisation. In such a perspective "influence is distributed widely within the institution and the leader is one participant in a collegial style of decision-making" (Bush, 2011, p. 197). Bennett (2003, p. 52) stresses that "it is through the day-to-day working out of [...] 'minute and diffuse power relations' that [...] organizational members' assumptive worlds are formed and influenced". Then, the development of supportive and collaborative relationships in a distributed environment is crucial for the success of the school goals.

Lumby (2013) is critical of the model of distributed leadership claiming that the opportunities to contribute to leadership are not equal for every one; she stresses issues of gender and ethnicity to support her view. Moreover, she argues that the effect of distributed leadership is just “to maintain the status quo of power” (Lumby, 2013, p. 2). Therefore, for organisational relationships to blossom in shared leadership environments there is definitely a need to establish the notion of *trust* (Busher, 2006) between the school members. Waterhouse and Møller (2009, p. 125) argue that “trust and power [...] are closely interrelated. Trust creates the conditions and mobilises people to action and collaboration. Trust and power both threaten and presuppose each other. [...] Headteachers [should] develop trust through trustworthy uses of power”. Hallam et al. (2013, p. 63) claim that “developing trust is a critical strategy for improving organizational performance”. Therefore, they argue that “a critical role and responsibility of the educational leader is to create and facilitate high-quality relationships that generate conditions of trust that enhance the school culture to support and sustain improved school performance”.

The role of the school leaders to develop a professional learning community, in which colleagues work together productively through positive relationships and collegiality, is stressed by Stoll (2013, p. 232): “Trust building starts with those in senior leadership positions inviting others to share in the leadership of the school and engaging



them in collective learning which is meaningful to them". Giancola and Hutchison (2005, p. 21) argue that "to trust a leader is to rely on the leader and to accept risks along with the leader. One relies on another because he or she respects the other's justice and integrity". Trust is also applied to the teachers. If the teachers are trusted by the headteacher that they can make decisions in the best interest of the school, then participation in decision-making should be extensive (Hoy and Miskel, 2001).

Trust is also important in the system leadership perspective. If there is trust between the headteachers and other staff participating in networks of schools, then partnerships are more likely to be successful. Bush and Glover (2014, p. 567) stress that school networking "raises issues about accountability, but has the advantage of bringing a wider range of leadership experience and expertise to help in addressing educational challenges and problems". On the same path, Coleman (2011, p. 299) claims that in networks between headteachers issues of power are evident because "partnership working can also be viewed as a mechanism for increased surveillance, as partners act as a check for other's activity and further scrutinize their actions". He also admits that the issue of power is "fundamental to the relative success or failure of partnership[s]".

Another important element of educational leadership is *vision*. Bush and Glover (2014, p. 555) argue that "vision has been regarded as an essential component of effective leadership for more than 20 years".

Kurland et al. (2010) argue that some researchers emphasise vision as an image of the future of the school organisation, which has the power to inspire, motivate, and engage people. They stress that “vision rallies people for a joint effort, motivates them to become involved and committed [...] causing them to exert additional efforts” (Kurland et al., 2010, p. 13).

Bush and Glover (2014, p. 555) suggest that “the articulation of a clear vision has the potential to develop schools but the empirical evidence of its effectiveness remains mixed”. Likewise, Busher (2006, p. 55) points out that teachers’ and leaders’ visions derive from their personal and work-related values, their self-identity, but he claims that their conceptualisation of visions for success are “utopian”, representing an “ideal state” which “is unlikely ever to be fully implemented”. Moreover, he claims that the values, perceptions and identities of marginalized students and parents from disadvantaged social backgrounds are not taken into consideration from educators, turning back the discussion to power issues. Against this, in the transformational leadership perspective, research conducted in Israel revealed that “vision is significantly predicted by principals’ transformational leadership style and is also a significant predictor of school organizational learning”. This confirms that “vision is considered to be the impetus for school transformational processes and a crucial element of effective leadership of learning organizations” (Kurland et al., 2010, p. 13).

The above discussion reveals that there is no easy way to understand leadership and to describe it in absolute terms, since concepts of school leadership are complex and diverse. Nevertheless, conceptualising theoretical models to describe leadership practice gives school leaders the appropriate ground to reflect upon their actions taking important feedback so as to change to the better. Bush (2011) argues that “theory is valuable and significant if it serves to explain practice and provide [...] a guide to action” (p. 24) and that “the relevance of theory should be judged by the extent to which it informs leadership action and contributes to the resolution of practical problems in schools” (p. 26).

### *Leaders and leadership*

Debate also arises on the distinction between school leadership and leaders. School leaders remain in most educational systems the centre of focus as agents of change. Thus, most of the development programmes worldwide provide for the growth of school leaders (Bush, 2012; Dinham, 2005; Su et al. 2003). However, school leaders do not act alone in the school; they interact with other stakeholders such as teachers to indirectly impact on students’ achievements (Bell et al., 2003; Sanzo et al., 2011; Crevani et al., 2010). This is why Bush (2008, p. 282) argues that “a stronger focus on school-wide leadership development appears to be timely” when at the same time he criticises the National College of School Leadership in the UK that “most of its provisions remain focused on individuals”. As Fullan

(2005, p. Xi, parenthesis in original) claims “leadership (not ‘leaders’) is the key to the new revolution”.

*The complexity of the school leader’s role*

The leaders’ role is becoming more complex through the years. As Shields (2004, p. 109) argues:

“Educational leaders are expected to develop learning communities, build the professional capacity of teachers, take advice from parents, engage in collaborative and consultative decision making, resolve conflicts, engage in effective instructional leadership, and attend respectfully, immediately, and appropriately to the needs and requests of families with diverse cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.”

Dempster (2009, p. 25) in agreement with Shields (2004) also states that “being a leader [...] necessitates different ‘readings’ in different contexts”. Additionally, Weindling and Dimmock (2006, p. 329) based on novice school leaders’ views, identify main problems to be related with their first years in post: “difficulties caused by the style and practice of the previous head; the school buildings; communication and consultation with staff; creating a better public image of the school; coping with a weak member of the senior team; dealing with incompetent staff; and low staff morale”. Therefore,

headteachers should recognise that leading a school is not an easy job and should seek for professional development.

### *The purpose of leadership*

Eventually, in such a confusing and demanding era school leaders should concentrate on “the purpose of leadership [which] should be to enhance the opportunities for all to learn to the best of their talents and capacities” (Dempster, 2009, p. 23). This argument points out that the centre of schooling is learning; it should not only involve students’ learning, but also teachers’ learning, leadership teams’ learning and school leaders’ learning. The importance of learning to lead is also supported by Hargreaves (2003, p. 30) saying that everyone should develop:

“The ability to learn how to learn and other meta-cognitive or ‘thinking’ skills; the ability to learn on the job and in teams; the ability to cope with ambiguous situations and unpredictable problems; the ability to communicate well verbally, not just in writing; and the ability to be creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial.”

Therefore, the ultimate task would be to learn how to lead and at the same time to lead learning for others. Ultimately, this drives sustainability forward (Fullan, 2005).

### *Successful school leaders*

In the same way that school leaders are expected to support learning for everyone in schools, they are also expected to manage national expectations and local demands successfully to ensure a smooth running of their school. Therefore, discussion of what we know about the ways through which school leaders lead successfully has grown rapidly. Day (2007) distinguishes success from effectiveness saying that “effectiveness is associated with instrumental outcomes of students (tests, examination results), whereas success is associated with these in addition to positive personal and social outcomes, well-being, and equity” (Day, 2007, p. 15), thereby success is a broader term.

In search of an answer to the question: “Why do some people seem to develop leadership capacities to higher levels and more quickly than others?” Leithwood et al. (2008, p. 36) argue that research evidence revealed that “the most successful leaders are open minded and ready to learn from others. They are also flexible rather than dogmatic in their thinking within a system of core values, persistent (for example in pursuit of high expectations of staff motivation, commitment, learning and achievement for all), resilient and optimistic”. Likewise, Ellison (2005) argues that successful are leaders who:

“Are aware of their own *knowledge* and *personal qualities* (sometimes referred to as skills, attributes and attitudes) and who are able to carry out their

current leadership roles successfully through demonstrating appropriate *actions*. They must be also able to continue to be affective in a changing world and to help other people to develop.”

(Ellison, 2005, p. 32, emphasis in original)

Leithwood et al. (2008) organised core leadership practices into four categories under the claim that almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire. These categories are: (i) Building vision and setting directions; (ii) Understanding and developing people; (iii) Redesigning the organisation; and (iv) Managing the teaching and learning programme. Likewise, Törnsén’s (2010, pp. 95-96) findings after interviewing twenty-four secondary school principals in Sweden, identify a number of factors which help to promote principals’ success. These factors seem to include *personal qualities* i.e. confidence, self-awareness, and motivation, as well as *physical qualities* i.e. physical traits of energy, and *professional traits* i.e. understanding of governance, risk taking, and handling critique.

Additionally to the above, a United States research study (Sanzo et al., 2011) indicated that successful school leaders are those who seem to place a strong emphasis on staff collaboration and staff support. School leaders argued on the importance of being open and honest with their staff members and “worked side-by-side with teachers to create a warm and caring learning environment” (Sanzo et al., 2011, p. 41). Common themes of practices emerged from the conversations

with the school leaders, and these were grouped into the following categories: (i) Sharing leadership; (ii) Facilitating professional development; (iii) Leading with an instructional orientation; and (iv) Acting openly and honestly (Sanzo et al., 2011, pp. 35-36). Another study in Virginia (Crum and Sherman, 2008, p. 576) presented as a virtue for success the humble, person-centered school leaders who “placed the credit for success on the shoulders of their staff and students, rather than taking credit for the accomplishment themselves”.

Furthermore, Merchant et al. (2012, p. 439) in a cross-cultural study with school leaders from Sweden and Texas USA, pointed out that for the creation of successful schools “principals’ work requires continuous readjustment and improvement to meet the many and varied external demands [...] They must be resilient in creating and sustaining learning environments in which all students can be successful”. Moreover, focus on learning, strong career orientation and personal motivation was evident in Drysdale and Gurr’s (2011, p. 366) study in Australia. Aspects for successful leaders’ leadership in these schools revealed that these school leaders: (i) had a love for learning and participated in formal and informal programmes; (ii) had a strong career orientation and accepted personal responsibility for their own development participating in formal and informal professional learning, reflecting on their practice and learning through experience; (iii) had strong personal motivations to create excellent schools and to be excellent leaders establishing a set of



values and beliefs which guided their actions; and (iv) were fully engaged in professional networks, including regional and state committees, to offer their expertise and to gain from the experience both personally and for their schools.

In a recent multi-case study in Cyprus in which data were gathered from a wide range of stakeholders (headteachers, teachers, students and parents) from two secondary schools, Pashiardis et al. (2012) investigated the actions and behaviours of successful secondary school principals. They reported that “both principals exhibit a continuous humane approach all over the school” and that “they exhibit a passion and commitment” (Pashiardis et al., 2012, p. 490). Furthermore, they argue that the criteria which both headteachers used to define successful school leaders in secondary education in Cyprus are (i) *professional characteristics*: setting high goals and expectations; managing strategically financial issues and available resources; organizing, coordinating and evaluating the teaching and learning process and the curriculum; supporting teachers’ personal and professional development and growth as well as their own professional growth; encouraging teachers’ participation in decision making (collegial cultures); cooperating with the parents and the community; active involvement in problem solving regarding teachers’ problems related to problems within the profession and students’ problems related to problems within the school setting, and (ii) *personal characteristics*: honesty; trust; passion; decisiveness; adhesion; vision; beliefs; risk taking.

What the above studies show is that: (i) there are qualities/characteristics of school leaders which are common between the studies in different educational systems, which might suggest that their results may have a wider applicability in other educational settings, (ii) the school leaders' role is very demanding, requiring them to be 'equipped' with many personal and professional qualities/characteristics to lead their schools successfully, and (iii) there is an apparent need to have selection strategies and developmental processes which will assist the selection of the most suitable people for leadership posts. What is important to point out here is that there is a need to address and negotiate the meaning of the terms (qualities/characteristics) used in the international research literature with what is meant by headteachers in Cyprus for each of these terms, in a cross-cultural perspective, so as to come into an understanding contextually appropriate to Cyprus: for example, the term 'democratic leadership' (see Appendix I) which is discussed in many countries of the western world, has a unique perspective in the Cyprus Educational System, affecting the practice of leadership, which might suggest a more radical leadership model.

Having explored the terrain of school leaders and leadership, the section that follows presents the concepts of formal and informal learning.

## Learning: Formal and Informal

“Since the last decades of the nineteenth century, many theories and understandings of learning have been launched” (Illeris, 2009, p.7). Each of them gave emphasis to different aspects of learning and each is consequently useful for different purposes (Wenger, 2009). The major concepts and theories of learning include *behaviourist theories*, *cognitive theories*, *constructivism* and *social constructivism*, and *situated learning theory* and *community of practice*. All were developed to explain the multi-dimensional issue of learning and can all be considered significant from their own perspective in any learning activity.

### *The landscape of learning theories*

“Behavioral theories of learning stress observable changes in behaviors, skills, and habits. [...] Learning is defined as a change in behavior brought about by experience with virtually no concern for the mental or internal processes of thinking” (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 433). Knowing, in this approach, could be characterised as observable connections between *stimuli* and *responses*, and learning is about how *positive* or *negative reinforcement* can change - forming and strengthening or weakening and extinguishing - behaviour (Greeno et al., 1996; Beatty, 2008). Then, “learning is the process in which associations and skills are acquired, and transfer occurs to the extent that behaviors learned in one situation are utilised in another situation” (Greeno et al., 1996, p. 16). Because these theories ignore

issues of social meaning, their usefulness lies on automatisms, severe social dysfunctionality or animal training (Wenger, 1998).

Researchers went beyond behaviourism exploring mental processes and knowledge structures using more complex assignments. Their experiments led to the idea that “learners are not passive recipients of information; rather, they actively construct their knowledge and skills through interaction with the environment and through reorganisation of their own mental structures” (Dumont et al., 2010, p. 39). Therefore, the emphasis of the cognitive approach is on what is happening ‘inside the head’ of the learner, and “they are useful for designing sequences of conceptual material that build upon existing information structures” (Wenger, 2009, p. 217). Cognitive theories of learning focus on reasoning, thinking, remembering, creating, planning, problem solving and comprehending language and preferred methods of instruction are lecturing and reading books (Hoy and Miskel, 2001; Greeno et al., 1996).

Constructivism emerged as a move from *knowledge acquisition* to *knowledge construction* (Hoy and Miskel, 2001). Beatty (2008, p. 147) argues that constructivism is a theory of learning “which advocates that learning occurs through connections that individuals construct between themselves and their existing inner knowledge and new understandings”. Therefore, constructivist theories of learning are concerned with how learners make meaning of events and activities they experience. The essence of the constructivist approach

is that it places the learners' own efforts at the centre of the educational process through hands-on, self-directed activities, problem-based learning and discovery, simulations and cognitive apprenticeships (Hoy and Miskel, 2001; Wenger, 1998).

Some constructivist views emphasise the shared and social construction of knowledge, whereas others see social forces as less important. "Whereas 'cognitive constructivism' recognizes that individual learners construct ideas based on their personal experiences, 'social constructivism' expands the construction process to include interaction with others as another means of making sense of new information" (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2014, p. 2). Along the same lines, Eraut (2004) stress that knowledge and learning can be examined from two perspectives: (i) the individual, and (ii) the social. The *individual perspective* is used "to explore both differences in what and how people learn and differences in how they interpret what they learn". The *social perspective* enables us to draw "attention to the social construction of knowledge and of contexts for learning, and to the wide range of cultural practices and products that provide knowledge resources for learning" (Eraut, 2004, p. 263).

The above two perspectives on learning seem to strengthen the appreciation that learning does not occur in a vacuum. Social learning theories evolved suggesting that people learn within a social context by placing the emphasis "on interpersonal relations involving imitation and modelling, and thus focus on the study of cognitive

processes by which observation can become a source of learning” (Wenger, 2009, p. 217). A person’s behaviour, environment and personal qualities all reciprocally influence each other, and positive role modelling is an essential tool for learning (Hoy and Miskel, 2001).

Moreover, the rise of the perspective of ‘situated cognition and learning’ that emphasised the significant role of context, particularly social interaction, changed the constructivist view of learning. In social constructivism, knowledge is considered as situated and is a product of the activity, context and culture in which it is formed and utilised (Lave, 2009). Lave (2009, p. 201) further stress that learning should be viewed as “changing participation in the culturally designed settings of everyday life [...] as a process of changing understanding in practice”. Along the same path, Beatty (2008, p. 139) argues that “all learning, even learning about learning, is contextual, shaped and reflected in cultural factors”.

Situated learning theory recognises that there is no learning which is not situated and emphasises the relational and negotiated character of knowledge and learning (Lave, 2009). The theory focuses attention upon learning as a “pervasive, embodied activity involving the acquisition, maintenance, and transformation of knowledge through processes of social interaction” (Contu and Willmott, 2003, p. 285). Learning could be the pursuit of formal activities and/or informal events and could result from social interactions or even the

conscious attempts of people attending formal activities within their communities in schools and beyond. Contu and Willmott (2003, p. 292) stress that through the above everyday practices “processes of knowledge formation and sharing [...] coincident with processes of identity formation”. According to the situated learning theory, it is within communities that learning occurs most effectively. Then, social interactions taking place within a *community of practice* have the potential to foster learning through participation.

### *Community of Practice*

Wenger (1998) stresses the concept of the *community of practice* as a social group with a shared history, mutually engaged in a practice on an ongoing basis to advance the goals of shared enterprise and can be viewed as a social learning system. Arising out of learning, it exhibits characteristics of systems, such as: emergent structure, complex relationships, self-organisation, dynamic boundaries, and ongoing negotiation of identity and cultural meaning (Wenger, 2009).

Learning is seen as a process of social participation in a community of practice, which “is a complex process that combines doing, talking, feeling, and belonging [...] involves our whole person, including our bodies, minds, emotions, and social relations” (Wenger, 1998, p. 56). Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 35) propose *Legitimate Peripheral Participation* “as a descriptor of engagement in social practice that entails learning as an internal constituent”. They argue that “the form that the legitimacy of participation takes is a defining characteristic of

ways of belonging [which is] a constitutive element of its content". Moreover, legitimate peripheral participation "refers both to the development of knowledgeably skilled identities in practice and to the reproduction and transformation of communities of practice" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 55). Additionally, they claim that participation is always based on situated negotiation and renegotiation of meaning (Lave and Wenger, 1991). They stress that peripheral participation provides the way for participants to locate themselves in the social world. Then, "*changing* locations and perspectives are part of actors' learning trajectories, developing identities, and forms of membership" (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 36, emphasis in original).

Wenger (2009, p. 210, emphasis in original) claims that participation refers "not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities". Additionally, Lave and Wenger (1999, p. 30) argue that "learning and a sense of identity are inseparable: They are aspects of the same phenomenon". Because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity. Then, during participation in a community of practice educational leaders will have the chance to engage in conversations with other educational leaders recognising the importance to "negotiate meaning" (Wenger, 1998, p. 56) and through these conversations to build their identities "as a very complex interweaving of participative experience and reificative



projections” (Wenger, 1998, p. 151). These conversations focus on requesting information, on sharing problems and solutions, in discussing new developments, in asking for opinion and advice, in identifying gaps in knowledge, in sharing new knowledge, which is mostly tacit knowledge. Tacit is the kind of knowledge that is difficult to transfer to another person by means of writing it down or verbalizing it. Rather, it requires “interaction and informal learning processes such as storytelling, conversation, coaching, and apprenticeship of the kind that communities of practice provide” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 9). Through these conversations informal learning episodes and shared histories of learning (Merriam, 2004) are produced between the members of the community, which will gradually turn into collective knowledge.

For communities of practice to flourish the relations and interactions between newcomers and full members are important gears. McGregor (2003) stresses that trust, mutuality and respect are major components of ‘social capital’ in communities of practice in order for members to share and participate. “Trusting relationships” as a characteristic of professional learning communities are also mentioned by Stoll (2013, p. 228): they include “respect, belief in colleagues’ competence, a personal regard for others – caring about each other – and knowing that people will do what they say; integrity”.

Then, novice school leaders will gradually move from the periphery to the centre, from peripheral participation to full participation, which will lead them to become full participants in a sociocultural practice of leaders (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Merriam, 2004). Lave and Wenger (1999, p. 30, emphasis in original) stress that for newcomers “the purpose is not to learn *from* talk as a substitute for legitimate peripheral participation; it is to learn *to* talk as a key to legitimate peripheral participation”. Athanassiou and Nigh (2000, p. 482) report that “members need to develop their own tacit knowledge stocks [...] through personal presence, which they then have to share through face-to-face interactions with one another in order to arrive at common interpretations of explicit knowledge”. They also argue that “this sharing of knowledge, tacit and explicit, is needed to arrive at strategic decisions”. In the community, the experienced school leaders will act as facilitators “in facilitating engagement, imagination and alignment [...] and facilitate active boundary processes to extend collaboration to collegiality” (McGregor, 2003, p. 126-127) providing: goals, structure, meaning, values, rules and tools for those engaging in the activities (Van Vlaenderen, 2004).

Mittendorff et al. (2006, p. 299) inform us of a paradox. They argue that despite Lave and Wenger’s original idea that communities of practice emerge naturally, there is a growing interest from a lot of organisations to create communities of practice “as a knowledge management tool to support or stimulate learning in the organisation”. They stress the question whether these intentionally

created learning groups actually are communities of practice. Therefore, they propose a diagnostic instrument to help identify communities of practice based on three elements: (i) *the group characteristics* (communities of practice), (ii) *the externalisation process*, which is knowledge conversion from tacit to explicit (collective learning), and (iii) *the collective learning outcomes*. They used their instrument to evaluate three organisations: a teaching department of a college for agricultural higher education; an expert group from the Dutch Government Service for land and water use; and, a nature conservation team from the Dutch Forestry Service; only the latter represented a community of practice with a strong culture (Mittendorff et al., 2006), which might imply that not every learning group is a community of practice.

Moreover, Busher et al. (2014) draw a distinction between learning communities which are set up intentionally and those which are emergent or naturally occurring communities of practice. They identify not only important similarities, but also they recognise important differences between ‘intentional learning communities’ and ‘emergent communities of practice’. The similarities draw on issues such as that they both emphasise collaborative cultures, they differentiate core and peripheral members, they recognise the importance of boundaries and they recognise that communities often have overlapping membership. They stress that the most important difference between them lies in power issues (Busher et al., 2014). Moreover, they argue that in intentional learning communities

“hierarchically appointed leaders are viewed as essential in constructing cultures and practices of working and acting as gatekeepers. They exert control over new members [...] by expecting them to conform to codes of practice and language or to learn these, before they are permitted full membership” (Busher et al., 2014, p. 805). Furthermore, intentional learning communities have a top-down direction, they work under a mission statement, and resources are provided to the participants. Therefore, intentional learning communities have a formal structure. As against this, “in emergent communities of practice the role of formal leaders is vague, although informal leadership is said to be exercised by existing core members of communities, the old lags [...], who teach new entrants the ropes” (Busher et al., 2014, p. 805). In emergent communities of practice an informal structure is evident. Participants decide to connect among themselves driven by a problem they face, which is of common interest to the community. Moreover, participants in informal communities of practice have conversations, not meetings. Also, there is no agenda, and the conversations are evolving naturally.

The above does not imply that there is harmony and homogeneity in a community of practice in all cases. Research findings from a study by James et al. (2015) who investigated groups of students who participated in the ‘Access to Higher Education’ programme revealed “inequalities of power, sustained by the institutional structures and professional discourses within which the AHE [Access to Higher Education] were located” (James et al., 2015, p. 1). Moreover, conflict

can be a central part of the practice even in horizontal hierarchies where there is no visible form of power. For example, conflicts between novice and experience school leaders can be identified in the course of everyday participation since “granting legitimate participation to newcomers with their own view-points introduces into any community of practice all the tensions of the continuity – displacement contradiction” (Lave and Wenger, 1999, p. 31). Obviously, power relations might make it impossible for a newcomer to learn a practice and to become a full member of a community of practice when they are denied access to learning practices (Contu and Willmott, 2003). As Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 42) argue “hegemony over resources for learning and alienation from full participation are inherent in the shaping of the legitimacy and peripherality of participation in its historical realizations”. Furthermore, the emphasis on learning as negotiation of meaning has not only to do with the participants’ beliefs and values, which they communicate as they strive to identify themselves in the community, but also with the reproduction of institutional structure through axes of power such as class, gender, race, institutional roles and government systems (Wenger, 1998).

### *Conceptualising formal and informal learning*

The distinction between *formal* and *informal learning* has preoccupied scholars in the field widely, because of the necessity to conceptualise the terms and find distinct boundaries between them. Eraut (2000) gave emphasis to what ‘formal learning’ is in order to

distinguish it from non-formal learning (he eventually abandoned the term 'non-formal learning' using 'informal learning' instead, see Eraut, 2004). According to Eraut (2004) formal learning consists of: (i) a prescribed learning framework; (ii) an organised learning event or package; (iii) the presence of a designated teacher or trainer; (iv) the award of a qualification or credit; and (v) the external specification of outcomes. Likewise, Schugurensky (2000) states that formal learning is: (i) highly institutionalised; (ii) compulsory; (iii) it implements a prescribed curriculum with explicit goals and evaluation mechanisms; (iv) it hires certified teachers; and, (v) its graduates are granted a diploma or certificate. Furthermore, Colley et al. (2003, p. 5) suggest that "formal learning combines high-status propositional knowledge with learning processes centered upon teaching or instruction, and is located within specialist educational institutions, such as schools, colleges or universities".

Consequently, informal learning is "any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria" (Livingstone, 2001, p. 4). It also includes *tacit knowledge* which is "knowledge that we cannot tell" (Polanyi, 1966, p. 5). Tacit knowledge is unwritten, unspoken and hidden based on emotions, experiences, insights, intuition and observations (Eraut, 2000).

Informal learning is considered to be important because it is the knowledge body which helps the learner to develop capabilities from

the early stages of life: starting from the basic ones of literacy and numeracy extending into the capability to take initiatives, to work collaboratively with others, to be able to learn continuously (Schugurensky, 2000; Livingstone, 2001). Coffield (2000, p. 1) argues about the importance of informal learning using a metaphor. He states:

“If all learning were to be represented by an iceberg, then the section above the surface of the water would be sufficient to cover formal learning, but the submerged two thirds of the structure would be needed to convey the much greater importance of informal learning”.

Scholars tried to set the boundaries between formal and informal learning and to propose a typology of informal learning. Eraut (2000) constructed his typology combining two dimensions: (i) *the time of local event*, and (ii) *the level of intention for learning*. In the former he asked whether the action was a past episode, a current experience or a future behaviour; whereas in relation to the latter he made the connection with learning modes such as *implicit*, *reactive (or opportunistic)* and *deliberative*. Eraut (2004) explains that: (i) *implicit learning*, is considered the acquisition of knowledge without explicit knowledge of what was learned, which also stands independently of conscious attempts to learn, (ii) *reactive learning*, is “near-spontaneous” and “intentional”, which occurs in the middle of

an action, when there is limited time to think, and (iii) *deliberative learning*, “where there is a definite learning goal and time is set aside for acquiring new knowledge, and engagement in deliberative activities such as planning and problem solving, for which there is a clear work-based goal with learning as a probable by-product” (Eraut, 2004, p. 250).

Likewise, Schugurensky (2000) suggests (i) *intentionality*, and (ii) *consciousness* as the two main dimensions by which three types of informal learning were identified: self-directed learning, incidental learning and socialisation. *Self-directed learning*, is both intentional and conscious and refers to learning projects undertaken by an individual without the assistance of an educator; *incidental*, is learning which is unintentional but conscious, where a learning experience occurs even though the learner has no previous intention to learn anything; and, *socialisation*, which is the internalisation of values, attitudes, behaviours and skills that occur during everyday life where there is no intention nor awareness of learning.

Bennett (2012) proposed an extension on Schugurensky’s conceptual model adding *integrative learning* as another type of informal learning. Bennett (2012, p. 28, emphasis in original) defined *Integrative learning* as “a learning process that combines intentional nonconscious processing of tacit knowledge with conscious access to learning products and mental images”. She explains further that *integrative learning* “may be responsible for



creative insight, intuitive leaps, and moments of sudden understanding” and she argues that it “may help explain some of the mystery behind sudden leaps of understanding and creativity” (Bennett, 2012, p. 28). For example, she argues that when individuals are working to solve a problem and realise that they have “an important learning gap they intend to fill, but have gone as far as they can with conscious thought – may find the solution when they turn their attention away from the problem so that integrative learning takes over” (Bennett, 2012, p. 28).

Despite the above attempts and efforts to distinguish between formal and informal learning, and at the same time to differentiate between the various types of informal learning, Malcom et al. (2003, p. 313) stress that there is “a complete lack of agreement in the literature about what informal, non-formal and formal learning are, or what the boundaries between them might be”. This lack of agreement may well be the missing link which creates the need to investigate the nature of learning further. Colley et al. (2003, p. 69) argue for the need for a greater conceptual clarification of the terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ so as “to specify the meanings, the purposes and the contexts” when using them.

Even though Malcom et al. (2003) conclude that it is difficult to define separately the ideal types of formal and informal learning, they suggest that “attributes of formality/informality are present in all learning situations, but that the inter-relationships between such

informal/formal attributes vary from situation to situation” (Malcom et al., 2003, p. 315). They also claim that there is no profound reason to keep trying to distinguish formal from informal learning and then to integrate them to produce a learning episode. Instead, they recommend identifying the attributes of formality/informality which are found in varying degrees, and constitute a specific learning situation for particular learners. Eraut (2004, p. 250) agrees saying that informal learning is the learning which “comes closer to the informal end than the formal end of a continuum”.

Eraut (2004) supports further that informal learning characteristics include learning which is implicit, unintended, opportunistic and unstructured and in the absence of an instructor. This does not imply, however, that informal learning cannot occur within a formally structured learning activity. In a formal setting where a structured activity is taking place with an instructor present, there may be times during teaching in which the participants are encouraged to draw on their experiences, engaging in a process of reflection-on-action, to use Schön’s (1983) term. There is obviously a move of power from the instructor to the participants. The participants control the discussion in the team and they may even control the outcome of this discussion, if they are left without interruption or guidance from the instructor. What is apparent from Malcom et al.’s (2003) and Eraut’s (2004) contributions is the agreement that a learning episode can consist of both formal and informal learning and that this occurs in a continuum of formality regardless of the place this takes place.

Malcom et al. (2003, pp. 315-316) propose a way to analyse learning in any context investigating the attributes of formality/informality which constitute the particular learning situation by using the following four aspects, each of which can range along a continuum from formal to informal in any particular situation: (i) process, (ii) location and setting, (iii) purposes, and (iv) content. These four aspects are described briefly below:

i. *Process*, is concerned with the control of the learning activity/event, the provision of pedagogic support, and assessment. In a formal learning activity an instructor controls the learning process, provides pedagogic support and conducts summative assessment of learning acquisition. On the contrary, in an informal learning event the learners control the learning, receive support from peers and engage in self-assessment.

ii. *Location and setting*, address the physical location of the learning process, in which, for example, a classroom is considered being more formal than a hallway of a university.

iii. *Purposes*, relate to whether learning is the primary focus of the activity/event, thus more formal or whether learning is an unintended outcome, thus more informal. It also introduces power relations, in which a learning situation set by an external authority, such as the Ministry of Education, is seen as more formal.

iv. *Content*, focuses on what is being learned and the expected results of learning. Acquisition of a theoretical knowledge or a high level of

technical skill would be considered more formal, whereas acquisition of knowledge through everyday practices would be considered more informal.

This continuum of formality must be conceptualised so as to lead to a better understanding of how school leaders learn informally and what its added value is. This is important because the usefulness of learning which occurs in formal training programmes is being challenged. The “honeymoon effect” (Goleman et al., 2008, p. 124) of most training lasts for just some months; enthusiasm and commitment for improvement retreats in the face of the demanding reality of everyday school life. As a result, Zhang and Brundrett (2010, p. 155) argue about the need to contextualise learning because “no external training programme will, on its own, prepare and develop effective leaders without internal and contextual support from within the school”.

### *Implications for school leaders*

We can see this in a variety of ways. For example, when educational leaders are engaged in practice, they form a new understanding of their work every day, every hour and every minute through reflection on practices and interactions (Schön, 1983; Zimmerman, 2011; Crevani et al., 2010) and making “practice ‘present’ through representation and reconstruction of past events, actions and emotions” (Dohn, 2011, p. 675): walking down the hall of the school talking with colleagues, exchanging information and ideas, asking for

an opinion, solving a misunderstanding, observing students' actions and attitudes, talking with parents, managing formal activities and informal events; all these lead through reflection to new learning each time. Schön (1983) distinguishes between reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The former is reflection during an action sometimes described as "thinking on our feet" and the latter is reflection after an action has ended. Reflection-on-action involves testing our "theories" and through one's experiences and feelings build a new understanding and develop further responses and actions in the situation that is unfolding. Schön (1983, p. 68) stresses that:

"The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomena before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomena and a change in the situation."

Then, new knowledge is created forming new meanings. New meanings create new challenges and it all goes round forming a never-ending cycle. It is what Crevani et al. (2010, p. 84) argue about when stating that "there is a clear need for a deeper empirical understanding of everyday leadership practices and interactions". These opportunities for learning must be introduced to other aspiring

or/and novice leaders so as to deepen and sustain learning (Zhang and Brundrett, 2010). What can be concluded from the above is that studying about leadership solely in formal settings away from the school context is insufficient. Most learning is not explicit, but it is rather informal (Eraut, 2011). Marsick et al. (2013) inform us of the tensions for the providers of leadership professional development programmes, first, in how they “can best design and support informal and incidental learning in ways that make it easier to carry out and relevant to their agendas” and second, to deal with the challenge which “involve shifting control of the experience to the learner” (Marsick et al., 2013, p. 223).

Experienced school leaders have great stories to tell, best practices and many ‘what to avoid’ to share; they have practised much of their own trial and error; they have managed complex problems and dilemma situations throughout the years. Hence, it is important to identify what sort of knowledge is transferable and in what ways this may occur. As Polanyi (1966, p. 4) said, “we can know more than we can tell” introducing the notion of *tacit knowledge*. Tacit knowledge is hidden waiting for the right situation to reveal. Schön (1983) agrees with Polanyi stating that:

“Often we cannot say what it is that we know. When we try to describe it we find ourselves at a loss [...]. Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with

which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is *in* our action.”

(Schön, 1983, p. 49, emphasis in original)

Eraut (2000, p. 133) argues that tacit knowledge can inform practitioners so as to: “(i) improve the quality of a person’s or a team’s performance, (ii) help to communicate knowledge to another person, (iii) keep one’s actions under critical control by linking aspects of performance with more and less desirable outcomes, and (iv) construct artifacts that can assist decision-making or reasoning”. Therefore, school leaders need to be given opportunities to retrieve past episodes, conceptualise new meanings and knowledge, and share these through discussions with others as critical friends in a dialectical relationship “involving the exchange of ideas and the search for shared meaning and common understanding” (Swaffield, 2008, p. 328). Zhang and Brundrett (2010) argue that:

“Two of the most important factors in leadership learning should be the contextualization of learning development and the need to ensure that headteachers take a leading role in the development of future school leaders since it is clear that headteachers themselves are a key catalyst for organisational learning.”

(Zhang and Brundrett, 2010, p. 154)

Novice school leaders also have a great role to play in the designing of a leadership programme. They are those who will identify their own gaps asking for support; who will accumulate experience and use this shared knowledge from experienced headteachers to lead better; who will do their own trial and error attempts to form their identity as leaders (Gronn, 1999); who will expand to new meanings and new knowledge. As Zhang and Brundrett (2010, p. 155) argue, the “system witnesses an informal learning process in the growth of headteachers through their professional lives as qualified teachers, senior teachers, curriculum leaders, deputy-heads and eventually as headteachers”. The need for dissemination of this knowledge from this learning process is apparent and Fullan (2005) recognises the importance of knowledge dissemination by saying that “there is a great deal of tacit and in-depth contextual knowledge that would be required to understand the lessons at work” (Fullan, 2005, p. 10).

Scholars support introducing informal learning not as a replacement for formal activities, but as a complement to them (Coffield, 2000; Malcom et al., 2003). Consequently, Dennen and Wang (2002, p. 443) argue that the two elements support one another because “a formal learning experience can help focus an employee and provide them with a goal leading to greater informal learning, or an informal learning experience may help generate a reflective process that prompts an employee to seek a particular type of formal learning experience”.



Furthermore, what Eraut (2000) argues is that professionals “talking more explicitly about their knowledge at work was more likely to occur when there was: (i) some mediating object, (ii) a climate of regular mutual consultation, (iii) a training or mentoring relationship, (iv) an informal relationship, (v) a crisis, review or radical change in practice” (Eraut, 2000, p. 120). Policy makers involved with the professional development of school leaders should take the above into consideration.

As it can be concluded, what is suggested from the literature is that the training should be located more in the school premises, moving on from lectures and simulations to complex interactions and events within the real field in which a school leader can deal directly with complexity and uncertainty and learn to lead.

## **Professional development of school leaders**

Educating school leaders is high in the agenda for educational systems in many parts of the world in their efforts to enhance the school’s capacity for sustainable development and reform (Fullan, 2005; Lumby et al., 2008; Bush, 2012). As Leithwood et al. (2008) claim, there is strong emphasis on leadership development because “school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning” (Leithwood et al., 2008, p. 27). Moreover, they argue that leadership development is crucial because “leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities

that already exist in the organisation” (Leithwood et al., 2008, p. 28). Additionally, Bush (2012, p. 665) states that:

“In the twenty-first century there is a growing realisation that headship is a specialist occupation which requires specific preparation. The reasons for this paradigm shift include the expansion of the role of school principal, the increasing complexity of school contexts, recognition that preparation is a moral obligation, and acknowledgement that effective preparation and development make a difference.”

Furthermore, educating new leaders for headship is vital because it is well accepted that “beginning a headship or school principalship for the first time is an exciting, exhilarating, but complex and difficult experience” (Weindling and Dimmock, 2006, p. 326). Hopson et al. (2003, p. 15) identify a number of problems for early year headship, which make the transition more demanding and tough: “(i) Feelings of professional isolation and loneliness; (ii) Dealing with the legacy, practice and style of the previous headteacher; (iii) Dealing with multiple tasks, managing time and priorities; (iv) Dealing with the school budget; (v) Dealing with (supporting, warning, dismissing) ineffective staff; (vi) Implementing new government initiatives, notably new curricula or school improvement projects; and (vii) Problems with school buildings and site management.” It is obvious that to address all these complex environmental, societal and

educational issues and lead successfully, school leaders have to be well prepared and their professional development should be continuous from thereafter to ensure the quality and development of schools (Cowie and Crawford, 2007).

### *The construction of identity*

Additionally, Gronn (1999, p. 173) argues that the newcomers face “the construction of a new identity” which is something crucial both for the individuals, and for their schools. In the same line, Grint (2003, p. 93) supports that “identity is constructed not discovered”. Therefore, identity is not a “stable entity – something that people have” (MacLure, 1993, p. 312); instead, identity in certain life and/or career phases is rather “discontinuous, fragmented, and subject to turbulence and change” (Day et al., 2006, p. 613). Bauman (2000, p. 83) uses the ‘volcanic lava metaphor’ to support the above claim saying: “identities are more like the spots of crust hardening time and again on the top of volcanic lava which melt and dissolve again before they have time to cool and set”. Therefore, multiple identities are created, which are “tested by the self to assess the psychological support they offer and projected to others as a means of protection and aggrandisement” (Lumby and English, 2013, p. 200).

Consequently, headteachers (like other school members) “bring with themselves [...] their own sense of self-identity constructed from various different elements – who they are, what point they have arrived at in their journey towards full adulthood, and how they stand

within their own society” (Rogers, 2003, p. 54). Knowledge of the ‘self’ is a crucial element in the way professionals construe and construct the nature of their work. MacLure (1993, p. 312) argues that people develop through “personal qualities and values, as well as their professional expertise”, and that “professional development [...] involves a reflexive search for self-knowledge and self-improvement”. Likewise, Day et al. (2006, p. 613) claim that “identities are a shifting amalgam of personal biography, culture, social influence and institutional values which may change according to role and circumstance”. Then, “moulding a new professional identity as a head requires the formation of a new sense of status, image and self-worth in the role and in the career; it means establishing values, priorities and what one stands for” (Weindling and Dimmock, 2006, p. 388).

Giddens (1991, p. 79) argues that “negotiating a significant transition in life [...] mean[s] running consciously entertained risks to grasp the new opportunities which personal crises open up”. Especially, during the induction stage the school leaders face challenges within and outside the school; challenges also stemming from their inner self, which is in a constant dialogue with the assumptions and beliefs they had in prior management positions so as to mold the new identity, which is not that simple.

The school leaders are not alone in this ‘dialogue’. As Rogers (2003) argues: “we are not only constructing ourselves but also constructing

others; and [...] ourselves are being constructed by other people in our various identities and the roles that go with those identities” (Rogers, 2003, p. 51). He states, further, that “almost all of our identities involve relationships” and that “there is a constant dialogue going on”. Therefore, “no matter what any leader does, or fails to do, frequently it is how she or he appears or seems to be from the point of view of those others” (Gronn, 1999, p. 66).

### *Leaders’ developmental phases*

Educational researchers (Day and Bakioglu, 1996; Gronn, 1999; Ribbins, 2003; Huber, 2008; Pont et al., 2008) classify stages and phases of leadership careers to identify how leaders progress. Day and Bakioglu (1996) in their study of headteachers’ lives and careers identify four series of developmental phases: (i) Initiation; (ii) Development; (iii) Autonomy; and (iv) Disenchantment. The *Initiation* phase has two key processes: learning on the job and working within the existing institution’s framework. The *Development* phase is important because consolidation and extension of leadership role take place. School leader’s confidence after successful growth leads to the third phase which is called *Autonomy*. If during the third phase the school leader faces threat from external or/and internal challenges, which could result in losing control and consequently losing confidence, then in the lack of control and in the stress from the negative impact the school leader might enter into the fourth phase of their model, which is *Disenchantment*. Gronn (1999) outlines in his suggested framework four phases namely: (i)

*Formation*, which progresses from infancy to adulthood, (ii) *Accession*, which refers to the preparation for higher roles and future headship positions, (iii) *Incumbency*, which is the headship period, and (iv) *Divestiture*, as retirement approaches. Ribbins (2003) diverges from Gronn (1999) and Day and Bakioglu (1996) at the third stage, suggesting that leaders can take one of two routes, either *Disenchantment* or *Enchantment*, depending on whether the leader faces negative or positive feelings.

Huber's (2008) conceptual model consists of six phases: (i) *a continuous development phase for teachers*, to provide development in school effectiveness, school improvement and school leadership, (ii) *an orientation phase*, to provide the opportunity for teachers interested in leadership position to reflect on their abilities and expectations (iii) *a preparation phase*, to prepare before taking over headship, (iv) *an induction phase*, to support the headteacher in early steps in headship, (v) *a continuous professional development phase*, to provide various training and development opportunities for established headteachers, tailored to their needs and their schools, and (vi) *a reflective phase*, to provide the opportunity for experienced headteachers to grow introspectively by being involved as instructors and mentors to novices' professional development.

Moreover, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development stresses the need to invest in leadership as a continuum with three distinct phases: (i) *Initial leadership training*, as a strong

asset to practice; (ii) *Induction programmes*, to prepare and shape initiating school leadership practices and provide networks; and (iii) *In-service training*, to cover need and context (Pont et al., 2008).

### *Leaders' development in the western world*

Pre-service training and in-service training of school leaders are seen differently by scholars in different countries of the western world. For example, in some countries induction programmes are organised by the authorities whereas in others there is lack of them (Bush, 2012; Pont et al., 2008).

In the United States there is a tradition of formal programmes of school leaders' preparation prior appointment to a headship (Su et al., 2003). *Administrative internship*, as it is called in the United States or *leadership apprenticeship* in England (Earley, 2009), is used in many preparation programmes in the United States so as to place the aspiring school leaders in an educational setting, which should enable them to gain experience in practical roles (Crow, 2006). Wasonga and Murphy (2006, p. 162) report positively that apprenticeship experiences "enabled students to create their own knowledge (actions, decisions, programs) based on the principal's tacit knowledge. The interns were also exposed to the complexities and simplicities of school administration (the big picture) that were not explicit in their university courses".

In England, professional development of school leaders has changed considerably since the establishment of the National College of School Leadership in 2000 (now National College for Teaching and Leadership). Currently, there are numerous professional programmes offered by the College not only to headteachers but also to middle leaders, senior leaders and aspiring leaders. Since 2001 the College has been offering the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), which became compulsory in 2009 (Bush, 2012). MacBeath (2011, p. 110) argues that NPQH “experienced a succession of changes, bringing it progressively closer to the day-to-day work of school leaders, making it more responsive, flexible and personalised and able to keep abreast of, and exploit, the emergence of new technologies”. Newly appointed headteachers’ support continues with the “Development Programme for Consultant Leadership [which] encourages headteachers with at least five years of experience to take on a role in facilitating the learning of others in school leadership positions” (Pont et al., 2008, p. 179). This initiative comes across Gronn’s argument that “leaders have to become learners themselves and that they have to promote the learning of others” (Gronn, 1999, p. viii).

### *Mentoring, coaching and socialisation*

Different approaches have been developed and evaluated through the years by educational systems around the globe. Induction resources, such as mentoring and coaching (Crow, 2006; Clayton and Myran, 2013; Duncan and Stock, 2010; Huff et al., 2013) are used



continuously. Barnett and O'Mahony (2008, p. 233) stress that "mentoring and coaching are important peer-support processes for assisting administrators to learn new skills, better understand their school environments, and clarify their career orientations and aspirations". Even though coaching and mentoring are used "interchangeably", they are "quite different activities [...] varying on the length and focus of the relationship" (Barnett and O'Mahony, 2008, p. 238). They also claim that "successful mentors must possess certain types of expertise to pass along to novices whereas coaches facilitate learning and do not need to be experts in various aspects of leadership" (Barnett and O'Mahony, 2008, p. 245).

*Mentoring*, as Nir (2009, p. 178) defines it, "refers mainly to systematic and long-lasting interactions between veteran and novice practitioners, intended to improve the socialization of the novice to the profession and to decrease his or her stress". Thus, connecting novices with experienced leaders moves the training into the field, where novices could have fruitful interaction with peer headteachers on important leadership matters and reflect. *Coaching*, as Barnett and O'Mahony (2008, p. 238) define it, "usually takes place over a relatively short time span. For example, a principal or a colleague would provide 'just in time' coaching assistance to someone who is having difficulty getting a power point presentation completed".

Moreover, mentoring and coaching are suited to address individual needs and learning becomes personalised covering the school

leaders's needs. Zhang and Brundrett (2010, p. 156) reveal that "school leaders felt that as they had come from different backgrounds and all had different skills they were in need of training which suited their individual needs".

Even though literature suggests positive outcomes from the use of mentoring and coaching in developing school leaders (Duncan and Stock, 2010), this is not the case in all situations because of numerous parameters which might impact the process. Huff et al. (2013, p. 519) evaluating the implementation of their coaching model in the southeastern USA with twenty-four school leaders participants, realised that the coaches differ in their practical strategies during the sessions despite the "uniform and extensive training that all the coaches received at the same time", which raises questions about the success of the training. Additionally, Clayton and Myran (2013, pp. 72-73) reveal that "too many interns are reporting a sense of completing the internship with compliance and are focused on simply completing time logs and getting in the hours". They also stress the need for consistency across the programmes for meaningful and authentic learning in internship experiences. Furthermore, the cost for mentoring and coaching is something which might be another barrier to using them as developmental strategies. Therefore, Duncan and Stock (2010) suggest moving the developmental process in a more informal way proposing the formation of informal support networks.

Professional development of school leaders is a developmental process which requires long-term investments of time and energy (Gronn, 1999; Browne-Ferrigno and Muth, 2006) and which is not implemented in a vacuum. Instead, the majority of learning occurs in the physical environment of the practitioner, in our case in schools. Eraut (2000) points out that knowledge “is often acquired through a process of socialisation through observation, induction and increasing participation rather than formal inquiry” (Eraut, 2000, p. 122). Likewise, Weindling and Dimmock (2006, p. 338) argue that “it is through adapting, changing, and often rejecting the status quo, that the [...] headteacher is socialized into the role, thereby acquiring his/her own distinctive identity”. Fullan (2005, p. 69) supports the above saying that “it is not just workshops and professional development for all. It is the daily habit of working together, and you can’t learn this at a workshop or course. You need to learn it by doing it and having mechanisms for getting better at it on purpose”. Athanassiou and Nigh (2000, p. 483) inform us that “a high level of sharing of [...] experiences through face-to-face interactions with its ensuing creation of tacit knowledge stocks also acts as a socialization process [which] may lead to shared values”. Furthermore, it is important to seek for “research knowledge which helps us understand what leaders in schools can do to maintain their focus on learning, not just for their students, but their teachers, parents and themselves” (Dempster, 2009, p. 22).

## **Final remarks**

What is evident from the above international research literature is that there are many common features characterising successful school leaders. There is also an agreement that these features include not only professional, but personal factors as well. It is apparent that policy makers should take into consideration research in the field of successful school leaders to inform professional development programmes. A move from formal activities to informal events in the field may offer the missing link towards learning to lead and leading learning.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **Introduction**

This chapter seeks to explain and justify the research methodology which underpins the present study. It begins by locating and justifying the study within a wider research framework. It continues with further clarifications of the philosophical approach underpinning this research, which places it within a specific ontological and epistemological context. The research design and research methods employed in this study are explained next.

The researcher seeks to answer the following questions:

- In what ways do school leaders learn how to lead?
- In what ways can informal learning contribute to the professional development of school leaders?
- In what ways could informal learning be incorporated into a holistic model of school leaders' professional development programme?

In doing so the researcher takes an interpretivist viewpoint with the aim to understand the perceptions and experiences of school leaders in Cyprus on the way they learn to lead through their life stories. The researcher takes the view that there is no single objective reality; instead 'multiple realities' (Creswell, 2003) constitute the social

world. The 'images of the world' are seen through the lenses of both the participants and the researcher, which leads to the perception that social reality is created through the social interactions of individuals.

Moreover, the researcher does not set aside the reality emerging from quantitative findings, which lead to the notion that this is another reality worth of consideration in a struggle to understand the social world through multiple perspectives of reality (Creswell, 2011). Therefore, the researcher adopts a mixed methods research design relating multiple paradigms to different phases of this research study (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The overall scope has to do with the negotiation of meaning stemming from multiple perspectives (Bryman, 2007), so as to capture a more complete picture of the phenomenon under study.

## **Wider research framework**

The wider framework within which this study rests draws on three premises: (i) on Habermas's (1971) work on *knowledge and interests*, (ii) on Gunter and Ribbins's (2003) work on *knowledge provinces*, and (iii) on Lave and Wenger's (1991) work on *situated learning*.

Habermas (1971) provides a typology of three possible types of research. These may originate from (i) a technical interest, (ii) a practical interest, and (iii) an emancipatory interest. As he argues, 'the "orientation toward[s] technical control, toward[s]

understanding [...] the conduct of life, and towards emancipation from [a] seemingly ‘natural’ constraint [help to] establish the specific view-points from which we can apprehend reality” (Habermas, 1971, p. 311). Habermas’s notion of the way knowledge is shaped can be used to analyse all aspects of human endeavour (Aber, 2010). The first type, *technical interest*, focuses on tasks. The knowledge sought here is instrumental in order to generate general theories and laws; this is also known as *positivism*. The second type involves researching with a *practical interest*, which unfolds through the “medium of interaction or language, and it has given rise to the possibility of what Habermas calls historical-hermeneutics, a way of interpreting the meaning systems of peoples and cultures. Its goal is to achieve understanding by making explicit the patterns of consensus and reciprocity that make human interaction possible” (Aber, 2010, p. 127). This mode of inquiry is referred to as *interpretivism*. The third type is *emancipatory*, which is concerned with the power issues, and is referred to as *critical theory*. The present study is premised in Habermas’s *practical interest*, which favours the interpretive mode of inquiry. It is embedded in an *interpretivist* viewpoint since its aim is to understand the perceptions and experiences of school leaders in Cyprus on the way they learn to lead.

In addition to Habermas’s typology, this research follows Gunter and Ribbins (2003) work. They conceptualised six knowledge provinces within which studies may be positioned: conceptual, descriptive,

humanistic, critical, evaluative and instrumental (see Table 3.1). This research study can be located in the humanistic province since it draws on stories of school leaders' lives and experiences. According to Gunter and Ribbins (2003, p. 133) "the humanistic province is concerned with the subjective construction of experiences through an agent's location in the world, and how the agent engages with structures that seek to shape and determine action". School leaders' learning to lead is understood through the interviewees' experiences and perceptions and so explores how knowledge is produced and used (Gunter and Ribbins, 2003).

**Table 3.1** Knowledge provinces in the field of school leadership

Conceptual	Concerned with issues of ontology and epistemology, and with conceptual clarification.
Descriptive	Concerned with providing a factual report, often in some detail, of one or more aspects of, or factors, relating to leaders, leading and leadership.
Humanistic	Concerned with gathering and theorising from the experiences and biographies of those who are leaders and managers and those who are managed and led.
Critical	Concerned to reveal and emancipate practitioners from injustice and oppression of established power structures.
Evaluative	Concerned to measure the impact of leadership and its effectiveness at micro, meso, and macro levels of interaction.
Instrumental	Concerned with providing leaders and others with effective strategies and tactics to deliver organisational and system level goals.

*(Adapted from Gunter and Ribbins, 2003, p. 133)*

The third premise on which this study rests follows Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of learning as a situated activity through a process they call *legitimate peripheral participation*. In this way they draw attention to the active participation of learners in communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).



Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory recognises the social and cultural role of existing practitioners in supporting new practitioners to grow into a community of practice and develop from novices to competent practitioners. They argue that legitimate peripheral participation:

“Provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice. A person's intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural practice.”

(Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29)

Then, participation,

“Refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities [...] is both a kind of action and a form of belonging [...] shapes not only what we do, but also who we are and how we interpret what we do.”

(Wenger, 1998, p. 4)

The philosophical position which underpins this research is based on the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed and the focus is on “learning as a social participation” (Wenger, 2009, p. 210). As stated above, learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a sociocultural community of practice. Individuals have their personal way of reasoning influenced by both the organisational environment in which they act, by their previously acquired knowledge from the on-the-job experiences and by the values and beliefs they carry. Context and active participation in a community of practice influence the way these individuals construe concepts such as learning and learning to lead, which will in turn influence the ways in which they learn how to lead and the way they lead.

Having placed the present research study within a wider methodological framework, the next section explores the paradigm worldview underpinning this study with emphasis on ontology and epistemology.

## **Paradigm worldview**

Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 107) argue that a paradigm “may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ‘ultimates’ or ‘first principles’”. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world’, the individual’s place in it, and

the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts". Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 41) use the term *paradigm worldview* to express the same notion. They argue that "worldviews differ in the nature of reality (ontology), how we gain knowledge of what we know (epistemology), the role values play in research (axiology), the process of research (methodology), and the language of research (rhetoric)". In order to understand the chosen design for this research in terms of methodology and methods used, it is necessary to identify its ontological and epistemological positions, and the methodological premise from which the study draws on.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) present four main worldviews: Postpositivism, Constructivism, Participatory, and Pragmatist. Constructivism is most closely aligned with the approach of this research study. As this study places people and people's experiences in the centre of its focus, it is grounded in the constructivist - interpretivist paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111, emphasis in original) define a constructivist epistemology as one in which "the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds". "As a social practice research is itself a meaningful human action constructed through interpretive frames" (Scott and Usher, 2011, p. 31). In social research, both researchers and subjects are sense makers and knowers, and therefore, research is about interpreting the actions of those who are themselves

interpreters. Research, then, “is an interpretation of interpretations” (Scott and Usher, 2011, p. 31).

For interpretivists there is no single objective reality (Hesse-Biber, 2010), but “multiple realities” (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 42) are constructed “with the images of the world participants carry with them” (Morrison, 2005, p. 19). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) argue that “the constructivist views reality as multiple and actively looks for multiple perspectives from participants, such as perspectives developed through multiple interviews” (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p. 41). Hesse-Biber (2010, p. 105) states that “for the interpretative researcher, the social reality is created through the social interactions of individuals with the world around them”. Therefore, the researcher’s scope is to explore “the ‘meanings’ of events and phenomena from the subjects’ perspectives” (Morrison, 2005, p. 18) constructed in their field of work and social interactions.

In addition, the ontological assumptions of interpretivism are that social reality is the result of interactions and knowledge shared between multiple actors in real social contexts, who consequently interpret events differently creating multiple perspectives of an incident. The social world, according to interpretivism, cannot exist outside the individual minds of social actors (Grix, 2010; Morrison, 2005). The role of the researcher in the interpretivist paradigm is to “understand, explain and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 19) even if “interpretive

researchers recognise that they are part of, rather than separate from, the research topics they investigate. Not only does their work impact upon research participants, but participant's impact upon researchers" (Morrison, 2005, p. 18). As Hesse-Biber (2010, p. 105) informs us, a mixed methods project from an interpretative perspective "often uses quantitative research as an auxiliary to the primary qualitative methodology as a means of both understanding the broader objective context and contextualizing people's experiences".

The aim of this study is to explore school leaders' views on the way they learn how to lead. Because this study is based on self-reported data, which raises issues of subjectivity, it is of paramount importance that the research design and application is strong enough to ensure that the data collection and analysis is robust enough to support claims in relation to meanings, attitudes, beliefs, feelings and emotions.

## **Research methodology and design**

Morrison (2005, p. 11) maintains that "ontology and epistemology affects the methodology that underpins researchers' work; crucially, methodology provides a rationale for the ways in which researchers conduct research activities". Likewise, Mackenzie and Knipe (2006, online, emphasis in original) argue "that the most common definitions suggest that *methodology* is the overall approach to

research linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework". As previously explained, this research anticipates examining and seeking to understand school leaders' professional development. The purpose is to investigate the way school leaders learn how to lead and explore the contributions of informal learning to professional development. As such, this research lies on the grounds of interpretivism. "Researchers in this paradigm tend to place emphasis on meaning in the study of social life and emphasise the role language plays in constructing 'reality'" and "in particular, they stress the meanings given to the world in which those studied live" (Grix, 2010, p. 84). Interpretivists, usually employ qualitative approaches, because they can allow a rich and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. Qualitative researchers "agree that the social world can be understood only from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated" (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 19). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) offer the following definition:

"Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices [...] turn the world into a series of representations [...]. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. [...] qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to

make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.”

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 3)

As discussed above, the philosophical assumptions underpinning this study acknowledge and accept that social reality as seen and interpreted by individuals produces multiple realities. As such, this study adopted an exploratory mixed method sequential design (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2, p. 20).

The exploratory Phase One of this study included a strategy of interviewing secondary education people holding different positions in the Cyprus Educational System (experienced and novice headteachers, deputy-heads, deputy-alpha-heads and instructors in the mandatory professional development programme) in alternating sequences in two cycles of four interviews. Phase Two included a cycle of four interviews which led to the design of the quantitative questionnaire drawing on issues emerged from Phase One. This questionnaire was administered during Phase Three. Phase Four was a final confirmatory qualitative phase in which the findings from all phases of this study were discussed and explored further, so as to help interpret better what was actually meant from the findings. Detailed description of the four phases of this study can be found in Chapter Four.

In this design, it is apparent that priority is given to the qualitative aspect of the research study. Creswell et al. (2008, p. 187) argue that “in a sequential exploratory design, with the lead taken by qualitative research, the paradigm may be more interpretive”.

Certainly, the researcher is aware of the dichotomy presented between qualitative and quantitative research and the paradigm war which has dominated for decades the field of social research. The researcher is also aware of the “incompatibility thesis, which stated that it is inappropriate to mix QUAL and QUAN methods due to fundamental differences in the paradigms underlying those methods” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 15). Moreover, the researcher’s assumptions are linked with the interpretivist paradigm, which contradicts with the ‘single’ reality of the positivist paradigm, which favours the notion that human behaviour is rule-bound and that it should be investigated by procedures and methods designed to produce universal laws to explain the reality being researched (Cohen et al., 2007).

Even if there are differences and contradictions between the two paradigms, there is a strong argument in favour of using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011; Harwell, 2011; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). The researcher shares Denzin and Lincoln’s (2008, p. 31) view that “all research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world



and how it should be understood and studied". Therefore, the researcher's assumptions lie on interpretivism i.e. there is no single objective truth; different contexts have different realities, which give multiple perspectives of reality; reality is constructed; we need to start from the participants' views to build theory through inductive logic. At the same time the researcher does not set aside the reality which comes forward from quantitative findings. Stepping from the above argument, this is something to be taken into consideration in developing reasoning and knowledge of the field under study.

The mixed methods tradition is characterised as the "third research community" (Teddle and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 4), with the other two being the quantitative and the qualitative. Johnson et al. (2007) analysed nineteen definitions for mixed methods given by highly published mixed methods researchers. Similarities and controversies were identified. This diversity uncovers the fact that the field of mixed methods is still under development; mixed methods research "is still in its adolescence" (Teddle and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 4). Specifically, there are unresolved issues mainly related to defining the nature of mixed methods research and the philosophical assumptions and stances underpinning them (Creswell, 2011; Johnson et al., 2007; Teddle and Tashakkori, 2009). Eventually, Johnson et al. (2007) suggested the following definition using an inductive method through the analyses of the nineteen definitions in a struggle for consensus:

“Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.”

(Johnson et al., 2007, p. 123)

However, Creswell (2011) admits that definitions used for mixed methods fail to unlock the field. Thus, he suggests using instead the following core characteristics to describe mixed methods. Subsequently, in mixed methods the researcher:

- “collects and analyzes persuasively and rigorously both qualitative and quantitative data (based on research questions);
- mixes (or integrates or links) the two forms of data concurrently by combining them (or merging them), or sequentially by having one build on the other, and in a way that gives priority to one or to both;
- uses these procedures in a single study or in multiple phases of a program of study;
- frames these procedures within philosophical worldviews and a theoretical lens; and

- combines the procedures into specific research designs that direct the plan for conducting the study.”

(Creswell, 2011, p. 271)

A mixed methods approach is not only associated with strengths but with weaknesses as well (Creswell, 2011; Harwell, 2011). Bryman (2006) argues that there is “a case for encouraging researchers to be explicit about the grounds on which multi-strategy research is conducted but to recognize that, at the same time, the outcomes may not be predictable” (Bryman, 2006, p. 111). Moreover, Harwell (2011, p. 153) argues that:

“The separate phases of design, data collection, and reporting for qualitative and quantitative data are considered strengths... The weaknesses of this approach are the time and resources needed for separate data collection phases (as opposed to only collecting qualitative or quantitative data) and the expertise needed to integrate the qualitative and quantitative findings.”

Bryman argues that “the fundamental issue of the degree to which mixed methods researchers genuinely integrate their findings has not been addressed to a significant extent” (Bryman, 2007, p. 8). Yin (2006, p. 46) also points to pitfalls and remedies for integrating mixed methods throughout the conduct of a single study and he

concludes that “if each method uses its own isolated procedures, the result will be separate studies using different methods. Though the studies may be complementary, they will not really represent mixed methods research”. This might be the case when researchers decide “to ‘pick and choose’ among the axioms of positivist and interpretivist models, because the models are contradictory and mutually exclusive” (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p. 174).

Creswell (2011, p. 275) asks: “Can Paradigms (ontologies or realities) be mixed? [...] Can we really have one part of the research which takes a certain view about reality nested alongside another which takes a contradictory view?” He advocates saying: “Relinking paradigms and designs makes sense” (Creswell, 2011, p. 275). Also, he recognises that different paradigms give rise to contradictory ideas and contested arguments, and therefore, he suggests relating multiple paradigms to different phases of research design, which leads to his notion of using multiple worldviews in a single mixed methods study (Creswell, 2011).

This research study, therefore, linked qualitative and quantitative approaches to different phases of the research design. Phases One, Two and Four were qualitative, whereas Phase Three was quantitative. The findings from the qualitative phase and the results from the quantitative phase are presented separately and are merged in the discussion. This research study supports the argument that quantitative methods produce another reality complementing the

realities revealed through qualitative methods. The combination of multiple realities, which were mediated through data collection and analysis processes of the data from qualitative and quantitative, progresses the study into a coherent new reality which draws on a variety of analytical approaches. As Bryman (2007, p. 21) points out:

“In genuinely integrated studies, the quantitative and the qualitative findings will be mutually informative. They will talk to each other, much like a conversation or debate, and the idea is then to construct a negotiated account of what they mean together. [...] Mixed methods research is not necessarily just an exercise in testing findings against each other. Instead, it is about forging an overall or negotiated account of the findings that brings together both components of the conversation or debate.”

Added to the above controversies, Creswell (2011, p. 270) asks a series of questions regarding the value of mixed methods: “What value is added by mixing methods beyond the value gained through quantitative or qualitative research? Do mixed methods provide a better understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone?” These questions are considered vital in justifying mixed methods. He claims that “unfortunately, [they] remain unanswered in the mixed methods community” (Creswell, 2011, p. 280).

In contrast, this research study demonstrates that there is added value from the use of mixed methods under circumstances, instead of using only qualitative or quantitative methods. Complementarity was identified between qualitative findings and quantitative results since the quantitative results extended the findings from the interviews. There is added value from using mixed methods evident in the notion that: (i) qualitative findings explained in depth the participants' preference for informal than formal learning, and (ii) quantitative results presented the extent of this preference. Moreover, the use of mixed methods made it possible to capture a complete and holistic portrayal of the phenomenon under study.

## **Methods of data collection**

Research methods “can be seen as the techniques or procedures used to collate and analyse data” (Grix, 2010, p. 30). In this exploratory sequential mixed methods research, one-to-one, in-depth interviews and a survey using a questionnaire distributed by mail were employed as data collection tools. Using these techniques in a sequence QUAL-quan-QUAL (capitals show the more dominant method) offered the opportunity to use data from one stage to inform the next stage. Qualitative findings were crucial for the purpose of developing the questionnaire for the survey, thus the qualitative findings were informative and developmental. At the end of this research study the idea is to construct a negotiated account of what qualitative findings

and quantitative results represent together, in an effort to fully understand the professional development field of school leaders in Cyprus, especially in terms of informal learning.

## **Interviews**

Given the complexity and sensitivity of this piece of research, which includes school leaders' attitudes, experiences and perceptions of leadership and learning to lead, interviewing was an appropriate means of gathering rich data enabling participants to recall on their memories, discuss their thoughts, reflect on their actions and elaborate on them in detail (Cohen et al., 2007; Scott and Usher, 2011; Denscombe, 2003). Boeije (2010, p. 63) argues that "the goal of an interview is to see a slice of the social world from the informant's perspective and the interviewer is merely facilitating the process".

In this study, semi-structured interview procedures were used which "allow respondents to express themselves at length, but offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling" (Wragg, 2002, p. 149). When using semi-structured interviews, the emphasis is on collecting detailed responses and seeking clarification regarding the basis for participants' answers, ensuring in-depth investigation since direct contact at the point of the interview means that information can be checked for accuracy and relevance at the same moment this is collected (Denscombe, 2003). Moreover, interviews also allow interviewees to reveal their own interpretations of the phenomena

under study as a reflection process and make sense of their social world. As Cohen et al. (2007) argue:

“Interviews enable participants – be they interviewers or interviewees – to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable.”

(Cohen et al., 2007, p. 349)

Creswell (2008) considers it fundamental for the success of an interview to employ certain techniques during the process such as probing for clarifying purposes, which means asking the interviewee to explain the answer in detail, and probing for elaborating purposes, so as to explore in more depth. Scott and Usher (2011, p. 116) state that by “the use of hints, prompts and re-phrasing of questions, the interviewer can both ensure that respondents interpret the questions in the same way and be more certain that participants do in fact understand what they are being asked”.

Conducting interviews has disadvantages as well (Creswell, 2008; Denscombe, 2003). The researcher had to dismiss, reduce or avoid the negative effects deriving from using interviews as a data collection method. Some of them are unavoidable; for example that it is a time-



consuming process (Creswell, 2008). Denscombe (2003, p. 190) claims that another disadvantage is that data analysis might produce non-standard responses because “semi-structured interviews produce data that are not pre-coded and have a relatively open format”. Contrary to the above, multiple views and rich data are considered as a benefit for this research study, as they allow for more depth and richness through interpretation of what is presented. The semi-structured form of the interviews was used so as to allow flexibility by using questions without strictly insisting on the order set in the interview schedule, but instead the approach was to follow the interviewee’s argument, which in a way could facilitate positively the process. Rephrasing was used for some of the questions when needed and clarification was given when asked from the interviewees. The aim was to keep the interviews in a pleasant and friendly climate in order to move the interview from ‘inquisition’ to a dialogue between colleagues.

Additionally, Creswell (2008, p. 226) reports the following disadvantages: (i) interviews provide only information ‘filtered’ through the views of the interviewers [which “has an adverse effect on reliability” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 190)] (ii) interview data may be deceptive and provide the perspective which the interviewee wants the researcher to hear [the interviewer effect mentioned by Denscombe, 2003], and (iii) the presence of the researcher may affect how the interviewee responds. These disadvantages were dealt with by adopting the following strategies: careful and focused listening to

what the interviewee was communicating; checking for signals through body language, which is a very significant tactic (and the more experienced interviewer you become the more you develop this quality); appropriate preparation regarding content and process; excellent knowledge of the context in which the participants work; efficiency in probing and/or asking for clarification and/or asking for an example or a story from the field; also, what was very important for the success of the interviews was the communicational steps and how the researcher established interviewees' trust before the interview. For example, the format of the invitations for the interviews and the formal way the researcher talked with the participants on the phone ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

### **Survey: Questionnaire**

The second data collection tool used was a structured questionnaire. A survey "provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. From sample results, the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population" (Creswell, 2003, p.154).

Denscombe (2003) presents four basic criteria for evaluating a research questionnaire. The questionnaire should: (i) provide full information, (ii) provide accurate information, (iii) achieve a decent response rate, and (iv) "adopt an ethical stance, in which recognition is given to the respondents' rights to have the information they supply

treated according to strict professional standards” and also “moral obligation on the researcher to protect the interests of those who supply information and to give them sufficient information about the nature of the research so that they can make an informed judgment about whether they wish to cooperate with the research” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 159). These basic criteria have guided the development of the questionnaire and all required steps were followed and necessary arrangements were fulfilled.

Bell (2002, p. 164) draws on the significance of the clarity of the instrument when claiming that as a researcher “you want every single item to be worded in such a way as to ensure that all items are necessary, that respondents understand what you mean, are able to provide an answer on the spot and are not offended by the wording or assumptions”. The three most important issues in priority by the researcher to test the questionnaire were the following: (i) the amount of information participants were to be asked, (ii) the time participants might need to answer the questionnaire, and (iii) clarity of the language used (Denscombe, 2003).

## **Sampling strategy**

Plano Clark and Creswell (2008, p. 197) argue that “to understand mixed methods sampling, researchers must first have a solid understanding of traditional sampling strategies, including probability, purposive, and convenience sampling”. Traditionally,

probability sampling techniques were used in quantitative oriented studies, whereas purposive sampling techniques were used in qualitative studies. Convenience sampling is referred on samples which are easily accessible or willing to participate. The latter sampling strategy will not be discussed in any detail in this study.

Hesse-Biber (2010) argues that quantitative approaches to sampling need to ensure that their findings are representative of the population under study; this is in line with the law of probability, which indicates that all members of the population have equal probability to be selected in a sample. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p. 170) state that “probability samples aim to achieve representativeness, which is the degree to which the sample accurately represents the entire population”. The focus is on achieving greater breadth of information from a larger number of representative units of the population of interest. Purposive sampling techniques are primarily used in qualitative research studies and may be defined as selecting units based on specific purposes which lead to the answering of the research questions (Plano Clark and Creswell, 2008), meaning that the participants who have experienced the central phenomenon explored in the research study are intentionally selected (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). The focus is on attaining greater depth of information from a smaller number of purposefully selected cases.

Then, “mixed methods sampling techniques involve the selection of units or cases for a research study using both probability sampling

and purposive sampling strategies” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 171). This research study employed a mixed methods exploratory sequential design, and therefore a sequential mixed methods sampling “involve[ing] the selection of units of an analysis for a mixed methods study through the sequential use of probability and purposive sampling strategies (QUAN-QUAL) or vice versa (QUAL-QUAN)” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009, p. 186).

A different sampling technique was employed to meet the demands of each data collection phase. Each phase was followed by a data analysis which informed the next data collection stage. This had implications for the sampling technique used as well each time. As Hesse-Biber (2010, p. 51) argues “analyses of findings in your current analysis of the data and theoretical insights you come up with provide new sampling questions: Whom will I talk with next? What additional sources of data should I explore? What data will challenge or confirm my theoretical understanding of this finding?”

Consequently, Phases One and Two employed a *Maximal Variation* sampling technique, “a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait” (Creswell, 2008, p. 214). This was used at the beginning of this study during *Phases One and Two* (see Figure 4.1, p. 113) in combination with *Snowball Sampling* technique, which “is a form of purposeful sampling that typically proceeds after a study begins and occurs when the researcher asks participants to

recommend other individuals” (Creswell, 2008, p. 217). During this period individuals who differed in terms of leadership position or/and status in the System (novice headteachers, experienced headteachers, deputy-heads, deputy-alpha-heads and instructors in the professional development programme) were interviewed, so as in a short period of time to be able to collect the complexity of the field adopting a variety of points of view (Creswell, 2008).

For Phase Three, no particular sampling technique was used as the structured questionnaire was sent to the population of secondary education school leaders, and secondary education deputy-alpha-heads. This meant that the questionnaire was sent to 115 headteachers and 168 deputy-alpha-heads.

For Phase Four, a *Confirming and Disconfirming* sampling technique was used. This purposeful technique was used to “follow up on specific cases to test or explore further specific findings” and “to verify the accuracy of the findings” (Creswell, 2008, p. 217) throughout the study. These participants were chosen under certain criteria: gender; years of experience; and, level of education i.e. lower and upper secondary education. Each participant in Phase Two was asked to propose one male and one female headteacher from the national headteachers’ list, one from the lower and one from the upper secondary education. If a name was proposed from a previous interviewee, then the researcher asked for another proposal. Eight headteachers were proposed, four men and four women; two of them

withdrew due to other commitments. Four school leaders – two male and two female – accepted to participate in the interviews.

## **Validity and reliability**

Denscombe (2003, p. 273) states the importance of justifying methods and conclusions in any kind of research by saying that “such justification cannot be an assertion or an act of faith, but must rely on demonstrating to the reader the nature of the decisions taken during the research and the grounds on which the decisions can be seen as ‘reasonable’”. It is important to address data and results in terms of *validity* and *reliability* in a struggle to eliminate threats in the justification of the research study, even if “threats to validity and reliability can never be erased completely [...] threats can be attenuated by attention to validity and reliability throughout a piece of research” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 133).

### *Reliability*

Reliability refers to the extent to which studies can be replicated. Hesse-Biber (2010, p. 85) argues: “Reliability asks: If I use the same measure today and repeat it again on the same population shortly thereafter, will I obtain the same results?” In other words, it requires that different researchers or the same researcher on different occasions, using the same methods, can obtain the same results as those of a prior study (Boeije, 2010).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 211) state that reliability in quantitative research “means that scores received from participants are consistent and stable over time” and therefore “quantitative research assumes the possibility of replication” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 148). Moreover, Boeije (2010, p. 169) states that in quantitative research “reliability is often determined by calculating internal consistency and stability over time. Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient is commonly used to measure internal consistency [and that] stability over time is normally measured through a test-retest approach”.

However, reliability in qualitative research plays an insignificant role (Creswell, 2011). Also, Hesse-Biber (2010, p. 89) argues about the oxymoron of the concept of reliability when applied to qualitative research since its philosophical assumptions is to get multiple understandings. She claims that:

“Even if one replicates this type of design the next day and gets a different answer, it does not necessarily mean the mixed method study was not reliable. Instead, what it may mean is that the researcher uncovered a new layer of meaning to the problem.”

In order to satisfy the criterion of reliability in this research study, the researcher employed *transparency* (Boeije, 2010) as a quality measure by documenting precisely on all stages of this exploratory



mixed method sequential design. In particular, precise identification and systematic description of the strategies used to collect and analyse data were used to enhance the possibility of replication (Cohen et al., 2007). Furthermore, a positive strategy during the data collection was the recording of the interviews. This strategy provided the unbiased record of the conversation with the interviewee. At the same time it offered the researcher the opportunity to concentrate on what the interviewee was saying so as to organise better the follow-up and the probing questions, ensuring consistent answers from participants, which helped to reduce threats to reliability. The recorded interviews were transcribed carefully in order to provide a basis for reliable analysis. Moreover, a rigorous and systematic coding procedure was employed so as to minimise inaccuracies and misleading interpretations.

In addition, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to measure internal consistency of the developed questionnaire. This procedure measures how closely related a set of items are as a group. Nine scales in the questionnaire had an alpha coefficient higher than 0.7, which is considered an accepted reliability coefficient (see Table 5.3, p. 179). This indicates that the items in each scale measure the same construct. Two of the scales had an alpha coefficient lower than 0.7. These are discussed further in Chapter Five.

## *Validity*

Validity is another important criterion of a good piece of research. Validity serves the purpose of checking on the quality of the data and the accuracy of the research findings (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Cohen et al. (2007, p.133) argue that “it is impossible for research to be 100 per cent valid; that is the optimism of perfection”. They also admit – and the researcher agrees with this position – that “at best we strive to minimize invalidity and maximize validity” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 133).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 210) argue that “validity differs in quantitative and qualitative research, but in both approaches, it serves the purpose of checking on the quality of data, the results, and the interpretation”. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 133) define validity in a descriptive manner explaining that: “in qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness”, whereas “in quantitative data validity might be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatments of the data”.

In mixed methods research, assessing the validity of studies is more complicated than in single method studies (Creswell, 2008). Scholars argue that in mixed methods it is better to use alternative terms instead of the term *validity*. Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006, p. 55)

argue that the “use of the word validity in mixed research can be counterproductive”. Therefore, they suggest the term *legitimation*, which they conceptualise as a process, not just an outcome, with presence at each stage of the research process. On the same path, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) suggest the evaluation of the process of *inference*, in which conclusions and interpretations start during data collection and follow data analysis. Looking to unify discussion about validity, Dellinger and Leech (2007) put forward a meaningful framework which is based on Messick’s (1995) conception of construct validity. They argue that their “conceptualization of validity depends on the negotiation of data meaning” which is accomplished “through argument as dialogue, criticism, and objection”. Furthermore, they claim that giving themselves “permission to appreciate and use multiple forms of evidence and to integrate others’ research and inferences and the varied meanings found in them” allow them “to make judgments about the meaning of data on the basis of its usefulness and interpretations and the consequences of these uses and interpretations” (Dellinger and Leech, 2007, p. 320). Others, such as Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that the validity term can be applied in both strands. Furthermore, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) argue that it is appropriate to use the term *validity* in mixed methods research, which the researcher adopts. Therefore, *external validity* and *internal validity* are discussed next.

*External validity* refers to the generalisation of the results to the wider population (Cohen et al., 2007). This is easier to understand in

a quantitative study. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 211) argue that “correct inferences can only [be] drawn to other persons, settings and past and future situations if the investigator has used procedures such as selecting a representative sample”. This is not the case in this research study since the survey questionnaire was administered to the whole population of the Cypriot secondary education headteachers and not just to a representative sample, which minimises the threat to external validity.

Moreover, the small samples used in qualitative studies are usually considered a threat to generalisation (Cohen et al., 2007). They claim that in qualitative research it is important to provide “a clear, detailed and in-depth description, so that others can decide the extent to which findings from one piece of research are generalizable to another situation” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 137).

The external validity of this study was enhanced through the following ways. First, throughout the four data collection phases, which provide sufficiently rich data and thick description of the subject under study. Moreover, the purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select the most appropriate participants so as to obtain deep knowledge of the field. Additionally, gathering multiple perspectives from individuals in different leadership positions and different settings on the same concepts can help to eliminate the threats on validity (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Furthermore, the combination of the qualitative and quantitative strand has the potential to achieve triangulation in

regards to individuals in different leadership posts, to different types of data (for example, statistics and transcripts) and different methods of data collection (for example, survey and interviews). In this study the qualitative Phase Four was used as an evaluation phase so as to confirm or disconfirm findings from previous qualitative and quantitative phases. Creswell (2018, p. 266) argues that “this ensures that the study will be accurate because the information draws on multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes”.

*Internal validity* is concerned with the causal relationship among variables or events (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). In qualitative research, internal validity refers to the extent to which the findings represent the social reality. The researcher in this study examined carefully the inferences drawn from the interview’s data and from the quantitative results in order to describe accurately the phenomena under study. Moreover, by combining quantitative and qualitative data this research study assessed findings in order to cross check evidence and explore further the possible interpretation for them.

## **Ethical issues entailed in the research**

Ethical issues are of a great importance in social research and this research study ensures that appropriate ethical standards were met and that those were of primary consideration. In the absence of ethical guidelines for doing research in Cyprus, this research drew on the British Educational Research Association (2011) guidelines.

Before the beginning of this study permission to conduct research in the Cyprus Educational System was granted from the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation.

Researching school leaders' beliefs, opinions and actions requires access to personal information and the right to report findings to inform future practice. Participants in research have rights (British Educational Research Association, 2011). This leads to a consideration of the ethical issues. First of all, they must be volunteers, which is the case in this study. Then, they must be informed from the beginning about their rights, about the purposes of the study, about the way in which the data will be collected and how the generated data will be used. Moreover, they must be informed about their role and what is expected from them. Finally, they must be informed that they have the right to withdraw at any point of the study (Creswell, 2008).

All necessary steps were followed to ensure ethical issues throughout the study. Participants in the interviews were sent a letter of invitation before the interview in which all necessary information was included such as: the research title and aim, the main questions, what is expected from their contribution and that these collected data will only be used for the purposes of this study, assurance about confidentiality and anonymity using pseudonyms and the right to withdraw at any time from the research and exclude their statements from the data. Before the beginning of the interviews an informed

consent statement (Appendix A) was given to the participants following Oates' (2006) framework. Approval was also asked from participants to record the interviews using a digital recorder, which was granted from everyone. The researcher assured that these files would be kept in a secure private location without anyone else having access to this sensitive material. Furthermore, the data were kept using the pseudonyms mentioned in Table 5.1 (p. 136) to secure the anonymity of the participants. No one else had access to the interviews' scripts. Moreover, on two occasions the interviewees asked the researcher to turn-off the recorder. This confidential information was not used by the researcher at any point of this study.

Busher (2002, p. 81) argues that "interviews are intrusive, and their questions can be distressing for participants if they are asked to confront aspects of their work or their lives which they find uncomfortable". In order to solicit through interviews the kind of information needed about school leaders' practices, their views, beliefs, values, life stories and experiences it was ensured from the start that trust was established from both sides. Honesty and respect ruled the relationship with the participants as an ethical stance from the researcher's side to approach participants as human beings with rights and entitled to respect. Furthermore, the writing up of the research is done in such a manner so that the interpretation and presentation of the data both respects the participants' right to privacy whilst sustaining the right of others to know about the research and its outcomes.

# CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH PROCESS

## Introduction

In this chapter the research process is presented in detail from Phase One to Phase Four, including sampling and analysis procedures. This study followed an Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods research design in four distinctive phases (see Figure 4.2, p. 115).

## Phase One: Initial and exploratory inquiry

Phase One consisted of the initial and exploratory data collection phase. Two cycles of four one-to-one interviews were implemented (see Figure 4.1).

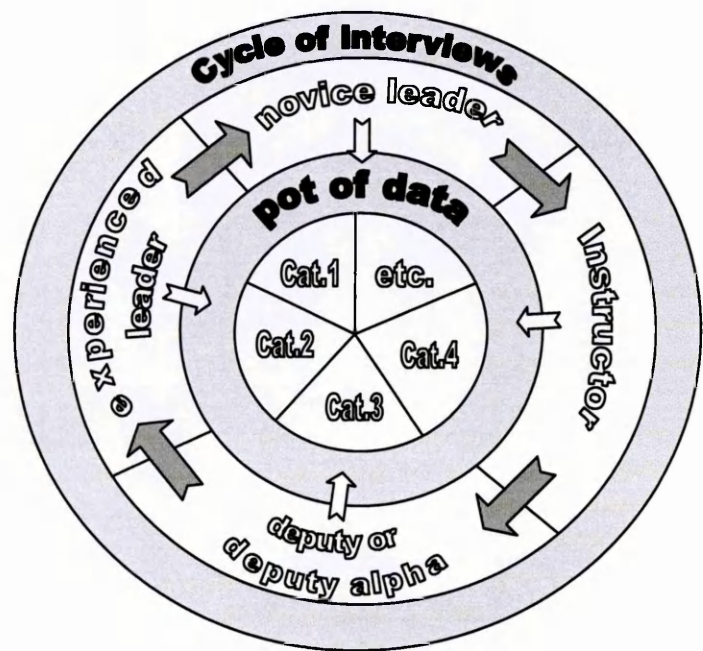


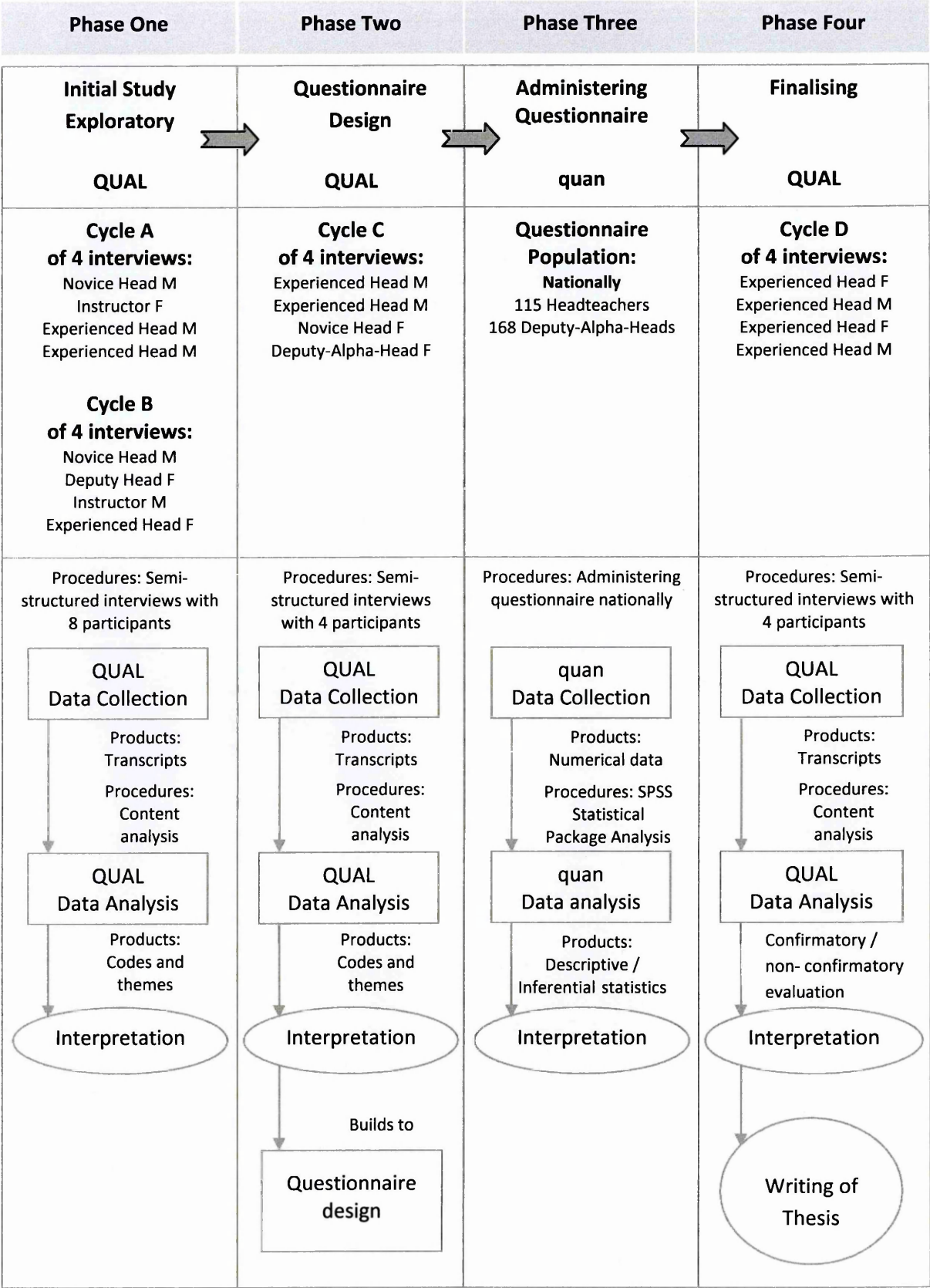
Figure 4.1: A Cycle of Interviews



Four interviews (Appendix B) in each cycle were planned for first steps having as criteria: (i) to include people holding different posts in the System, and (ii) to include in each cycle at least one novice and one experienced headteacher. This strategy offered the researcher the opportunity to gather the complexity of the field from an early beginning; this procedure may be thought of as a pot with added data and knowledge during each individual interview and moreover each time a cycle was completed.

Particularly, during Cycle A a novice headteacher, an instructor in the mandatory training programme and two experienced headteachers were interviewed. Then, during Cycle B a novice and an experienced headteacher, a deputy-head and an instructor were interviewed (see Figure 4.2, p. 115). Since the mandatory in-service training is provided to the headteachers only on their first year in headship, then everyone else from the second year onwards are considered as experienced headteachers from the System. The researcher regarded everyone who was on the second year in the post as experienced. There are no valid data to ensure that these headteachers were experienced or that they were experts. The sample characteristics are presented in Table 4.6 (p. 126).

The aim of Phase One was to collect qualitative data regarding school leaders' professional role, their leadership practice, their beliefs and values, their professional development including formal and informal learning and data regarding the context of their school and the



**Figure 4.2:** A procedural diagram of the exploratory sequential mixed methods design used for the study  
Notations: M=Male, F=Female  
Abbreviations: ‘QUAL’ stands for Qualitative and ‘quan’ stands for Quantitative. Capitals are used to denote the more dominant method.

context of the System. The analysis process started right after the end of each interview. At the end of the fourth interview's analysis, which completed each Cycle, a between-interviews analysis was implemented. Analysis of gathered data was considered rich enough to guide the following steps.

Then, the decision was to move on into Phase Two with another cycle of four interviews in which the emphasis was on successful school leaders' characteristics and on leadership practice. This decision was supported by the idea that the development of a school leader is linked in absolute terms with success; no leadership professional development programme would claim that success is not a priority.

## **Phase Two: Designing the questionnaire**

The previous phase and in particular Cycle C data was used to inform the designing of the research study's questionnaire. The sample consisted of two experienced headteachers, a novice headteacher and a deputy-alpha-head. The interview schedule (Appendix B) was developed having as a central area of interest the participants' views and perceptions regarding the development of the successful headteacher in Cyprus and their leadership practices.

After the ice-breaking part, a list of thirty-one qualities/characteristics of the successful headteacher in Cyprus (Appendix G) was presented in a table to the participants. This list was an outcome of Cycles A and

B. Each of the interviewees was first asked to choose the ten most important qualities/characteristics and afterwards to rank them by order of their importance starting from the most significant to the least, using number *one* for the most significant and number *ten* for the least significant. Then, they were asked to comment on each one of those ten qualities/characteristics they had selected, explaining how they understood the certain quality/characteristic and/or sharing a story from their experience. The decision to minimize the chosen qualities/characteristics down to only ten was made under two criteria: (i) for time issues, because the scope was to give the interviewees time to reflect on those qualities/characteristics in depth, and (ii) to have them think for a while about which of the thirty one they considered as the most significant, avoiding the 'all are significant' answer.

Finally in total, twenty-one qualities/characteristics were chosen from the four interviewees during Cycle C (see Table 4.3). Two were chosen by all four participants, five were chosen by three participants, three were chosen by two participants, and the remaining eleven qualities/characteristics were chosen by just one participant.

Then, six short scenarios (Appendix C) – adapted either from newspaper articles or from reflection of the researcher – were presented to the interviewees asking them primarily to define whether these scenarios were possible to happen in the Cyprus Educational

System and whether they have faced such issues in their schools, and comment briefly on each.

**Table 4.3:** Interviewees' ranking of twenty-one key qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders in Cyprus.

3 <sup>rd</sup> Cycle participants				Key qualities/characteristics
1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	
1	1	5	4	1.take initiatives and risks
9	8	7	1	9.inspire respect
	3	1	6	2.have communication skills
	9	6	8	4.be efficient with time management
2	2		5	5.have the courage to make difficult decisions
10	10		7	6.not getting anxious or nervous
7	6	2		18.be able to delegate responsibilities and duties effectively
3			3	3.create change for improvement
5		3		10.be fair with people
6		10		13.be enthusiastic
4				7.listen to followers
	7			8.manage public relations successfully
8				11.admit mistakes
	4			12.be people-oriented
		4		14.be organised
	5			15.be committed
		8		16.be able to develop a school improvement plan
		9		17.be able to organise a school self-evaluation
			9	19.face challenging circumstances efficiently
			2	20.face dilemma situations efficiently
			10	21.be democratic

*Note.* Numbers presented on the left hand side show each participant's categorisation of the ten most important qualities/characteristics. Numbers presented before the key qualities/characteristics show the place of the qualities/characteristics in the questionnaire.

The main scope of this activity was to provide a ground of reality during the interviews presenting important or/and difficult to handle issues a headteacher might face in schools, in order to give the interviewees the opportunity to express the way they were more likely to respond to those, what thoughts, beliefs, actions, decisions or solutions were likely to take place, and why these were chosen.

In fact, this activity gave the opportunity to have data on how a headteacher acts in difficult or/and crisis situations, what they take into consideration (for example, the involved parties and the complexity created, the urgency to respond, information gathering, dealing with demanding parents, handling dilemmas) and how the headteacher creates understanding before any action to solve the problem successfully. Next, they were asked to rank the scenarios in order of importance from one to six, using number *one* for the most important and number *six* for the least important. After that, they were asked to choose and comment in depth on one of the scenarios, after explaining why they had chosen it. All participants chose to comment on the scenario which they had ranked as the most important.

During the analysis (Appendix E) an induction process was used identifying “quotes or sentences, coding segments of information and the grouping of codes into broad themes” (Creswell, 2011, p. 188). Consequently, broad themes emerged which were considered the scales to be measured. These seven scales are presented below:

1. Professional Development of school leaders.
2. Macro-level politics.
3. Building professional identity.
4. Leading relationships.
5. Leading decisions and crisis situations.
6. Leading the organisation.
7. Leading Knowledge and Understanding.

The questionnaire (Appendix D) aimed to elicit the participants' views on a number of issues. In particular, in part A, data were collected on the following themes/scales: *professional development of school leaders* (for example, whether the training programme is effective, whether the way offered is efficient), *macro-level politics* (for example, what impact political decisions from the Ministry have on headteachers' professional development) and *building professional identity* (for example, whether experience on post and networking is a lever in building their professional identity). Part B was related to themes four to seven, investigating the degree of formality using statements which were produced out of the twenty-one key qualities/characteristics of successful headteachers, on the following themes/scales: *Leading relationships*, *Leading decisions and crisis situations*, *Leading the organisation* and *Leading knowledge and understanding*. Table 4.4 presents the distribution of statements in the questionnaire.

**Table 4.4:** Distribution of statements in the questionnaire

Themes/Scales	Part	Statements
1. Professional Development of school leaders	A	#3, #4, #5, #6, #8, #10, #22, #23, #24, #25, #30
2. Macro-level politics	A	#1, #2, #9, #11, #12, #14, #16, #17, #21, #26, #27, #28, #32
3. Building professional identity	A	#7, #13, #15, #18, #19, #20, #29, #31
4. Leading relationships	B	#2, #7, #8, #9, #12
5. Leading decisions and crisis situations	B	#5, #6, #18, #19, #20
6. Leading the organisation	B	#1, #3, #4, #14, #16, #17
7. Leading Knowledge and Understanding	B	#10, #11, #13, #15, #21

In Part A of the questionnaire a five-level Likert scale was used ranging from ‘*strongly disagree*’ to ‘*strongly agree*’. In Part B, the main objective was to discover whether the qualities/characteristics of the successful school leader are developed through formal or/and informal ways. For this purpose, two five-level Likert scales were used, ranging from ‘*not at all*’ to ‘*absolutely*’ in each case (see Table 4.5). The participants were asked to fill in both scales stating their views regarding the way a particular key quality/characteristic is developed: using formal activities or/and informal events? On the top of the page, before the presentation of these twenty-one statements, explanation was given of what this research study considers as formal and what as informal learning and a notice that they should rate both formal and informal scales.

**Table 4.5:** The structure of Part B of the questionnaire

Developed through Formal Activities	Statements: key qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders	Developed through Informal Events
not at all to some extent somewhat to a great extent absolutely		not at all to some extent somewhat to a great extent absolutely
1 2 3 4 5	Statement 1	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Statement 2	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	Statement 3, etc. up to Statement 21	1 2 3 4 5

**Phase Three: Administering the questionnaire**

In Phase Three, four meetings were implemented as a means to improve the questionnaire before administrating it in order to



improve its clarity (Bell, 2002). The centre of attention of these meetings was the structure and the content of the instrument. The meetings consisted of a novice headteacher and two deputy-alpha-heads, all from the researcher's school, and a research expert in educational research. The decision to ask for help from colleagues was made firstly because of convenience, and secondly because this particular phase was considered a technical-phase, therefore information exchange was not sensitive and bias was not an issue. Their contribution was primarily in terms of the content and the wording. The research expert's contribution was on the construction of part B (see Table 4.5) of the questionnaire and on shortening the questionnaire.

The initial questionnaire was given to the participants on their own time with the direction to read it for clarity of the meaning, count the time needed to fill it out and write down any comments or/and suggestions or/and misunderstandings they faced. Then, meetings were arranged after two-three days with each one separately. Probing questions were asked in order to clarify some of the suggestions and to make some issues of the given feedback clearer. These meetings were not recorded due to the nature of the activity. Each time before the next meeting the researcher adopted suggestions and developed the instrument further. Consequently, a fresh new instrument was presented in every following meeting. By the end of this process the questionnaire was significantly changed. A major change which was adopted was the shortening of the instrument into two parts.

Moreover, some statements were separated into two and words were changed to establish clarity. Then, the final questionnaire was pilot-tested by two experienced headteachers and two deputy-alpha-heads. After the pilot study some rephrasing occurred and some statements were excluded.

The questionnaire was distributed in April of 2013. It was sent by regular mail nationally to all secondary headteachers (N=115) and all deputy-alpha-heads (N=168) in Cyprus, excluding those from the cycles of interviews (some of them had retired by then) and the pilot-testing. It had been decided to include the deputy-alpha-heads because their post is one step prior to promotion to headship. Eventually, at the end of the collection stage it was decided not to analyse data from deputy-alpha-heads' questionnaires. This decision was only taken after deep reflection. The decision not to include the deputy-alpha-heads' questionnaires was made because the focus of this study is on the 'headteacher' and the decision to have data from the deputy-alpha-heads could have had a meaning only during the cycles of interviews, when the focus was on grasping the complexity of the field. Furthermore, the poor rate of return of the deputy-alpha-heads questionnaire raised issues for the representativeness of the results, which led to the final decision not to include them. Moreover, these were not included because the comparison between the two groups – headteachers and deputy-alpha-heads – was not an objective of this thesis. Due to the difficulty of contacting the relevant deputy-alpha-heads because of the anonymity of the completed

questionnaires, it was decided to send a copy of the final thesis to every school with the request that the study is shared with every deputy-alpha- head.

The questionnaire was sent a week after the Easter Holidays, towards the end of the compulsory programme. A telephone communication to every headteacher after the holidays was made, to invite them to fill-in the questionnaire in order to ensure a higher response rate. In this call I introduced myself stating my teacher status and the school I worked at and then I informed them about the purpose of my call stating the importance of their response for this study. Furthermore, I asked them to send the completed questionnaire back using the pre-paid envelope which was enclosed with the questionnaire, on which my name and address was printed. Some headteachers were difficult to reach, so all necessary explanation was given to their secretaries who promised to pass my request on. Finally, sixty seven (67) questionnaires from headteachers (N=115) were collected with a response rate of 58% (see Quantitative Strand Demographics in this chapter), which was considered a satisfactory response rate.

#### **Phase Four: Finalising the study**

The purpose of this final phase, which was qualitative, was to reflect on the overall findings from the previous phases as a confirmatory or non-confirmatory evaluation stage for the whole study. All interviews were conducted in December 2013. Phase Four consisted of four

interviews with experienced school leaders (see Sampling Strategy in Chapter Three for extensive explanation).

## **Sampling**

### **Qualitative strand sample**

During Phase One, Cycles A and B, which is the initial exploratory phase of this study, *maximal variation sampling* was used which is a purposeful sampling strategy (Creswell, 2008) so as to interview individuals who differ in terms of leadership post or status so that in a short period of time to be able to collect the complexity of the field. The recruited interviewees were five male and three female (see Table 4.6). Two of them were novice headteachers, three were experienced headteachers, one was a deputy-head and two were instructors in the mandatory professional development programme. Participants for Cycles A, B and C were selected employing a *Maximal Variation* (Creswell, 2008) technique in combination with *Snowball Sampling* (Creswell, 2008) technique. A *Confirming and Disconfirming* (Creswell, 2008) sampling technique was used to select participants for Cycle D interviews.

In Phase Two, Cycle C, the participants were two male – surprisingly, the first who accepted was retiring a week after the interview, and two female experienced headteachers. The female novice headteacher was recruited purposefully because she was the successor of the retiring

headteacher, and presented a unique situation because she had a two-month informal apprenticeship with him. The last interviewee was a female deputy-alpha-head.

**Table 4.6:** Sample for qualitative strand

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF STATUS	GENDER	YEARS OF SERVICE	YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION	INTERVIEWS' DURATION IN MINUTES
CYCLE A	Novice Head	Male	34	1	40
	Instructor Primary Teacher	Female	14	5	30
	Experienced Head	Male	32	2	40
	Experienced Head	Male	28	2	25
CYCLE B	Novice Head	Male	34	1	60
	Deputy Head	Female	33	1	40
	Instructor Primary School Inspector	Male	24	5	35
	Experienced Head	Female	31	5	30
CYCLE C	Experienced Head	Male	33	5	75
	Experienced Head	Male	33	4	100
	Novice Head	Female	22	1	80
	Deputy-Alpha-Head	Female	25	2	30
CYCLE D	Experienced Head	Female	25	2	35
	Experienced Head	Male	31	5	55
	Experienced Head	Female	32	3	25
	Experienced Head	Male	32	3	45

*Note.* Each cycle consisted of four interviews. See also Figure 4.2, p. 115.

The final phase of this study consisted of Cycle D of four interviews with headteachers, who were selected purposefully as well. They were experienced headteachers, of whom two were male and two were female, and two were leading secondary middle schools (pupils aged 13-15) whereas the other two were leading secondary high schools (pupils aged 16-18).

All headteachers in the qualitative strand sample (N=12) had served the System for a total of 367 years, from which 34 years as headteachers. Three of them were novice headteachers (one female and two male), and nine were experienced headteachers (three female and six male). Two headteachers had five years of experience. The mean in terms of years of experience was 30.6 years and the mean in terms of the years in headship was 2.8 years. One of the headteachers held a PhD, whereas seven of them held MA/MSc. The total duration of the interviews was 745 minutes (mean: 46 minutes).

**Quantitative strand demographics**

Sixty seven (67) questionnaires from headteachers were collected with a response rate of 58% (N=115). From those, 25 were from female headteachers, 35 were from male headteachers and 7 did not state their gender (see Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7: Gender**

Male	35	52.2%
Female	25	37.3%
Not stated	7	10.4%
Total	67	100%

Three of the headteachers (5.8%) were between 46-50 years of age, fourteen (26.9%) were between 51-55 years of age, thirty three (63.5%) were between 56-60 and two of them (3.8%) were older than 60 years of age. Fifteen did not state their age (see Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8: Age**

46-50	3	5.8%
51-55	14	26.9%
56-60	33	63.5%
>60	2	3.8%
Total Valid	52	100%
Not stated	15	
Total	67	

Sixteen of them (25.8%) were on their first year of headship, whereas the experienced headteachers were forty six (74.2%). Five did not state their status (see Table 4.9).

**Table 4.9: Years as a Headteacher**

1 year	16	27%
2 years	18	28.6%
3 years	10	15.9%
4 years	7	11.1%
5 years	7	11.1%
6 years	4	6.3%
Total Valid	62	100%
Not stated	5	
Total	67	

*Note.* Headteachers in their first year in post are considered as novice.

The mean for the years in headship is 2.7 years. Comparing this mean with the fact that 67.3% of the headteachers participating in the survey are over 56 years of age, with the retirement at the age of 63, proves that *seniority* argued by Pashiardis (2004a) was still a fact even in 2013, when the data were collected.

As far as academic qualifications are concerned (see Table 4.10) fourteen of them (20.9%) had a Master of Arts in Educational Management/Leadership, sixteen of them (23.9%) had a Master’s degree in other educational subjects, three of them (4.5%) held a PhD/EdD in educational management/leadership, two of them (3.0%) held a PhD/EdD in other educational subjects and thirty-two of them (47.7%) had no extra qualifications.

**Table 4.10: Academic Qualifications**

Master: Educational Management/Leadership	14	20.9%
Master: Other educational subjects	16	23.9%
PhD/EdD: Educational Management/Leadership	3	4.5%
PhD/EdD: Other educational subjects	2	3.0%
No extra qualification	32	47.7%
Total	67	100%

In table 4.11 below, the national profile of the Cypriot headteachers in 2013 is presented. What this data show is that as far as ‘Gender’ is concerned the study’s participants are consistent with the whole population of headteachers in the Cyprus Educational System. Moreover, in terms of the parameter ‘Years as a Headteacher’ what is obvious is that there is representativeness of all groups of headteachers from those in their first year up to six years of service in percentages which match those of the national list; the exception was the group of the headteachers who had 7 years of service in the post, since there was no one with 7 years of service identified into the returned questionnaires.



**Table 4.11: National profile of the Cypriot Headteachers**

Gender			
	Male	56	53.8%
	Female	48	46.2%
	Total	104	100%
Years as a Headteacher			
	1 year	31	29.8%
	2 years	21	20.2%
	3 years	18	17.3%
	4 years	12	11.5%
	5 years	13	12.5%
	6 years	6	5.8%
	7 years	3	2.9%
	Total	104	100%
Academic Qualifications			
	Master	34	32.7%
	PhD/EdD	12	11.5%
	No extra qualification	58	55.8%
	Total	104	100%

Note: The reported data were provided by the Educational Service Commission. These data report the headteachers' list on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2013. These show 104 headteachers. The total number of the headteachers referred in the Government Budget is 119. As explained from the Educational Service Commission this difference is created because of promotions, retirements or deaths during the school year, which are not easily traceable.

A question remains whether these three headteachers were in the list of five who didn't state their years in the post (see Table 4.9), which might be explained as a reasonable attempt from them so as not to reveal their identity. As far as the 'Academic Qualifications' is concerned an important outcome of the comparison between the participants' demographics and the national list is that almost everyone who held a master's degree returned the questionnaires participating in the study (30 out of 34). Also, the comparison percentage of the other two groups, namely the PhD/EdD holders and those who had no extra qualification, showed that the participants in

this study are representative of the whole population of headteachers nationally.

What the above show is that the participants in this study seem to be representative of the national population of the headteachers in the Cyprus Educational System. Also, due to the fact that the sample was quite extensive regarding the national population of headteachers (response rate 58%), there is strong evidence in favour of the generalisability of the results from the quantitative phase of this research study.

### **Data analysis – Procedure**

The various forms of data in hand helped to identify relevant analytic procedures to interrogate the data. These are presented next.

### **Qualitative data analysis – Procedure**

The data from the interviews were analysed using content analysis through which the main categories emerged. Data analysis followed a systematic process in accordance to Miles and Huberman's framework (1994) which involves three "concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 10). The first activity refers to "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the

data” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 10). Then, the condensed data was displayed into “an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action” and can be “matrices, graphs, charts, and networks” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 11). The third step was to come into conclusions “noting regularities, patterns, explanations, configurations, causal flows, and propositions” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 11) which were then verified through the process. In other words, the task was to identify important quotes or sentences, so as to code segments of useful information and to group those codes into broader themes (Creswell, 2011).

The first cycle coding process was followed by a second and a third review of the data; the same procedure was used in the analysis of the data from Cycle B and Cycle C (Appendix E). This procedure was adopted as a secure way to scan data in depth trying to get the concepts and grasp meaning from the data corpus. In vivo codes were taken from a single word to a longer passage and descriptive codes were generated. This procedure also allowed for reconfiguration of the codes developed thus far (Saldana, 2013). At the end of this process broader themes emerged which were used as scales to guide the development of the questionnaire. Seven scales were used at that time (see Table 4.4, p. 120).

Before proceeding in Phase Four a new review of the data was implemented, in order to take into consideration all findings from

Phases One, Two and Three. As a result, three major themes were revealed (see Table 4.12).

**Table 4.12:** Themes and categories emerging from data

RQ1: In what ways do school leaders learn how to lead?		
Professional development of school leaders: Learning to lead	Formal learning	In-service training
	Informal learning	Shadowing previous headteachers
		Reflection
		Socialisation
		Sharing examples of good practice
		Informal apprenticeships
		Incidental learning
		Self-directed learning
RQ2: In what ways can informal learning contribute to the professional development of school leaders?		
Building school leaders' professional identity	Leading role	
	Development of Leaders' qualities/characteristics	
RQ3: In what ways could informal learning be incorporated in a holistic model of school leaders' professional development programmes?		
Macro-level politics	The present situation	Criticism: the system
		Criticism: the training
	Suggestions for the future	Building leadership culture
		School-based learning
		School autonomy
		Community of school leaders

These were the following: (i) Professional development of School leaders: Learning to lead; (ii) Building School leaders' professional identity; and (iii) Macro-level politics. The four scales of part B of the

questionnaire, namely *Leading relationships, Leading decisions and crisis situations, Leading the organisation and Leading Knowledge and Understanding*, were grouped into the sub-theme *Development of Leaders' qualities/characteristics* under the major theme *Building School leaders' professional identity*. In Phase Four, Cycle D, which was used to evaluate the findings from previous phases, analysis of data from the interviews looked for *confirmation, contradiction and expansion* (Appendix E).

## **Quantitative data analysis - Procedure**

The quantitative data resulted from the structured questionnaire were transferred first into an Excel spread sheet. Then these were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics (means, standard deviation, independent samples test and paired samples *t*-test) were used in order to provide answers to the research questions of the study. The data was transformed into tables and was displayed in graphic format to represent the frequencies and the modes in the clearest and most informative way.

## CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this study following data analysis processes. The chapter consists of four sections. It starts by presenting qualitative findings answering the first research question: *In what ways do school leaders learn how to lead?* This is presented under the heading *Professional development of school leaders: Learning to lead*. The second section presents findings from the qualitative phases and from the quantitative Phase Three answering the second research question: *In what ways can informal learning contribute to the professional development of school leaders?* This section is presented under the heading *Building School Leaders' Professional Identity*. Section three is answering the third research question: *In what ways could informal learning be incorporated into a holistic model of school leaders' professional development programme?* The third section is presented under the heading *Macro-level Politics*. Finally, in the fourth section findings from the qualitative Phase Four of this research study are presented. The data acquired from Phase Four were analysed to explore whether this data confirm or disconfirm tentative conclusions reached at during the previous data analysis stages.

In presenting the findings from the qualitative phases, interviewees speak for themselves as much as possible, using direct quotations. The interviews were given in Greek except of one which was given in English. Only selected text was translated into English (Appendix F). To safeguard anonymity of the participants pseudonyms (Appendix J) are used (see Table 5.1).

**TABLE 5.1:** Pseudonyms

ACTIVITY	STATUS	GENDER	PSEUDONYM
CYCLE A	Novice Headteacher	Male	Isocrates
	Instructor	Female	Elpis
	Experienced Headteacher	Male	Kallias
	Experienced Headteacher	Male	Miltiades
CYCLE B	Novice Headteacher	Male	Demosthenes
	Deputy-Head	Female	Chrysanthé
	Instructor	Male	Nereus
	Experienced Headteacher	Female	Eudoxia
CYCLE C	Experienced Headteacher	Male	Aristodemos
	Experienced Headteacher	Male	Herakleios
	Novice Headteacher	Female	Apollonia
	Deputy-Alpha-Head	Female	Eutychia
CYCLE D	Experienced Headteacher	Female	Sappho
	Experienced Headteacher	Male	Philotheos
	Experienced Headteacher	Female	Xanthe
	Experienced Headteacher	Male	Theodotus

### Professional development of school leaders: Learning to lead

Working with the data from Phases One and Two, it becomes evident that Cypriot secondary education headteachers seem to be arguing that they learn how to lead based on both formal and informal ways. Their views are presented next.

## **Learning to lead – Formal learning**

It is widely appreciated amongst participants that learning *formally* how to lead equates to the mandatory in-service training programme. Their views of the programme vary with most of them being a critique of various aspects of it. This research study's purpose was not to evaluate the current programme. Participants' critique regarding the programme is presented in the *Macro-level Politics* section.

Miltiades's view of formal learning is illustrated in the following quotation:

“Formal education is the education which occurs in a foundation, in a school, in a university [...] following a structured programme [...] in which the instructor has certain tasks, has a schedule... distributes written material [...] What is this knowledge? This is formal knowledge... since you are participating in this seminar, and you are behind the desk and you have a certain schedule [...] this is formal learning experience.”

The introduction of a mentoring scheme, which was added in 2013-2014, was a significant change in the programme. Under this scheme, four to five novices were grouped with an experienced headteacher.



This was also a suggestion from Elpis, in her interview in 2011, long before the introduction of the initiative. She suggested that:

“Experienced headteachers or inspectors could act as mentors to them: (i) they can follow; (ii) they can ask for advice; (iii) their schools would become a network and share examples of good practice and share learning and become a learning community.”

Four whole day group meetings in non-sequential occasions in the mentor’s school discussing leadership practice were incorporated in the training. Philotheos, a mentor, stated:

“I let the day flow in normality without taking into consideration that today I am the mentor of four headteachers. If on that day I have a teachers’ board meeting or a meeting with the leadership team they get to participate so as to understand how it works.”

### **Learning to lead – Informal learning**

Nereus suggested that informal learning could be very promising and more effective than formal learning during the induction phase. He stressed though that informal learning should have a certain structure into the formal programme: “We need to put some limits, what we mean informal [...] for example, a laissez faire approach without any

limits might have its usefulness, but not for a programme which has tasks.”

Data identify a number of ways where learning occurs informally: by shadowing previous headteachers, through reflection, through socialisation, by sharing examples of good practice between fellow headteachers, through informal apprenticeships, from incidental learning events and through self-directed learning. These forms of learning are presented below in detail.

### *Shadowing previous headteachers*

Shadowing previous headteachers seems to be a very common way of development practiced at length from aspirant school leaders. Chrysanthé argued that “some of my previous headteachers and deputy-heads were bright examples”. Likewise, Eudoxia argued that “the best teacher for the headship is the example of previous headteachers”. Similarly, Isocrates stated that he learned to lead significantly by shadowing previous headteachers he served with. He acknowledged that “each one had her/his own leadership style” and that he “tried to get the best from everyone”. Therefore, he stated that he developed “a range of leadership experience derived from other colleagues” which he “reinforced with” his “own personality”.

Participants seemed to be arguing that knowledge is gained through shadowing unsuccessful headteachers as well. Kallias stated that he shadowed a headteacher for two years who dealt with mundane

things such as discipline issues and regulations regarding school uniform or hair cut all the time. He claimed that “the low results of that headship” helped him develop. Moreover, Demosthenes stated that “all headteachers had their positives and their negatives” and that he “tried to get the positive elements out of the experiences” he had.

Eudoxia expressed the view that every headteacher is potentially a role model. She argued that these school leaders:

“Act as potential instructors of the next leader... as others have worked for me as a role model [...] Of course it has to do with your ability of understanding... let's say it is an informal form of transfusion of experience of the current school leader to the aspirant.”

### *Reflection*

Another way of learning to lead by deriving knowledge from informal learning as data indicate seems to be reflection. As participants argued, reflection occurs when there is a stimulus, which offers them the opportunity to recall past experiences. Isocrates highlighted the importance of reflection in the following quotation:

“We start a conversation; we analyse the problems we face; our routine is analysed; even while having a

cookie and a coffee in the corridor. [...] These stories make me reflect: What is my impact on my school to change things? How do I proceed? How could I perform better?”

Chrysanthé admitted that she had some incidents at the start of the school year which led to increased friction and tension. It seems that she was able to implement what Schön (1983) named as *reflection-on-action* as she kept a professional diary where she used to write down everything which happened in school and how she reacted. In this way she tried to grow professionally, because of her inner need to be closer to her colleagues. Her thoughts are illustrated in the following statement:

“I caught myself communicating with colleagues in a wrong way, especially at the beginning of the school year. Then I did it again [...] then I reflected, I had a confessional monologue... and I decided that I must be a better colleague.”

### *Socialisation*

Socialisation was also a recurrent theme during the interviews. Apollonia admitted that what she understood from all she had learned during her two months of apprenticeship experience with an experienced headteacher about how to lead a school, was that the most important thing she had to do was to be “humane”. This proved

to be a challenge for her because her predecessor was beloved by his colleagues and students. She stressed that to be humane means to be “kind”, “caring”, “gentle”, “compassionate” and “civilised”. The following quotation from Aristodemos illustrates the notion of being a “humane” headteacher:

“I don’t teach what I know, I don’t teach what I have learned, but I teach what I am. In all situations during headship I will pass on to others what I am [...] if I do not have values, if I am not ethical, if I do not have a vision, [...] then, I have nothing to offer.”

Being a leader is evident by one’s actions which are interrelated with people’s perceptions, emotions, way of thinking, beliefs, attitudes etc. Participants expressed their commitment and their understanding of their professional role placing students in the centre. Chrysanthé expressed that:

“You have to show the way. Who you are and what you do, so that they respect you, they appreciate you and they love you. A mirror effect is active and you have to show them that you act with fairness and you support everyone in need.”

### *Sharing examples of good practice*

Headship was considered by the participants in this study as a lonely leadership journey, since the headteacher does not have many opportunities to interact with fellow school leaders. The importance of this interaction is evident in a statement from Nereus, identifying not only instructive but also affective support:

“Actually, the school leader is alone at school [...] the result is that s/he can’t interact with a fellow headteacher, to ask for support: Am I doing well? Am I doing wrong? When they interact with a fellow headteacher, this is therapeutic.”

Elpis talked about sharing between headteachers during the training sessions, acknowledging that there are very few opportunities for them to interact. She claimed that during the programme:

“I provoke them to start talking and sharing [...] sometimes during their arguments they have extremely conflicting views. But this is the nice thing about the programme, because they don’t have the time in another situation to be outside their schools with colleagues to get together and talk and share.”

Eudoxia stressed that the sharing of experience between novice headteachers is important because “since every school leader was

appointed in a different school they carry different experiences". She also argued that during programme sessions "sharing between school leaders in group activities could lead to more important knowledge than from standard lectures". Demosthenes agreed that "sharing experiences is something [...] we consider as essential".

Almost all of the participants in the interviews noted the importance of sharing experience and they admitted that they frequently asked experienced headteachers for their piece of advice in solving difficult problems and/or 'translating' a directive from the Ministry for the benefit of their school. What they claimed was that they were building a network of colleagues to support each other; as a result, novice and experienced headteachers seemed to be building *informal communities of practice*.

Aristodemos pointed on the importance of building trust between the supportive experienced and the novice headteachers. He argued about the need for a collegiality spirit:

"You will have constant contact with old colleagues; especially during the first year... this is not something to be ashamed about... I have this problem, what shall I do? How shall I act... the same happened to me after two – three years... they asked me what to do."

Nereus referred to his efforts to support the theoretical sessions with experiential insights. He used to invite experienced headteachers to participate in the sessions. He argued: "When I taught about leadership or about successful meetings, I used to lecture first and then invite an experienced headteacher to talk about her/his experience". He also supported that headteachers need to develop professional networks, which could serve them in various phases of their leadership career. This was clearly captured in his words as follows: "Networking could be developed in every stage either prior promotion or after promotion, and could be through meetings, or could take the form of communication through the internet."

### *Informal apprenticeships*

Two of the participants in Cycle C interviews were involved in a two-month informal apprenticeship because of the retirement of the experienced headteacher after five years in headship. The novice headteacher was informed by the District Office that she would take over two months after the beginning of the new school year. She was at the time appointed at a second chance evening school. Therefore, she could be at her new school in the mornings. The experienced headteacher accepted the challenge to have her next to him during his last two months of service.

Two of the most important issues for a successful apprenticeship mentioned by these participants were 'access' and 'trust'. Apollonia, the novice headteacher, argued that for such an initiative to succeed



there is a precondition. That “the retired school leader should not feel threatened”. Knowing each other for several years was a positive element for their apprenticeship relationship and they were very enthusiastic about this opportunity. As a result, any consideration for this unusual situation was not an issue in this case. Aristodemos explained the issues of ‘access’ and ‘trust’ as follows:

“[Apollonia] had been with us for two months. Who of the other headteachers would accept this condition? Maybe no one... this is wrong... She wanted to manage things, to get informed, to get organised [...] she learned how to keep a balance between staff. [...] It was an apprenticeship relationship. She asked: Why did you act this way? Shouldn’t it be that way? Be careful, I had to act this way because of that... oh yes, you are right! Two headteachers; one was making decisions while the other was watching.”

The result was splendid. It was a “smooth” transition as Aristodemos argued:

“What we experienced was unusual. The result was excellent because transition was smooth and no one was negatively affected actually... I kept telling everyone from the first day that they had a new

headteacher... they were not affected by my absence when I left.”

Apollonia explained that these two months were an “amazing learning experience”. Being next to Aristodemos with an open agenda and participating in every meeting he had with the teachers’ board, teacher committees, with parents and students was an exceptional experience.

“By watching how he handled certain situations, I recognised things I did before and things I hadn’t thought of or I didn’t know how to handle... the most important learning curve was that during these two months I realised that it is important to see things from the headteacher’s point of view... it’s a completely different angle of viewing reality.”

Apollonia also stressed that she had the chance to talk with everyone from a non threatening position; that she got familiar with staff, with pupils, with the parents’ board. This experience, including what Aristodemos passed on to her regarding who to trust, who to count on and what issues were problematic, issues about the building, about children who needed special handling etc. was a must for a newcomer.

### *Incidental learning*

Incidental learning refers to learning experiences that occur when the learner did not have any previous intention of learning something and it is unintentional but conscious. As participants claimed, these learning incidents may occur from a very small and insignificant event up to a crisis problem or an ethical situation, which are considered complex and significant.

As Eudoxia admitted “problems are never the same”. Thus, she stressed that claiming that you know the exact decisions and actions to solve a problem might sometimes be misleading. She follows a process. Learning will come as a reflection, but this will not come if the headteacher does not follow an evaluation process. It is important that the headteacher engages others in this process because then different angles of the same incident will be identified. Eutychia claimed that:

“After a crisis situation we evaluate with the leadership team; what we did and what would have been a better way of acting? What was a wrong action? Who helped us the most? [...] This process is very important because through this you might handle a new challenge better.”

The most challenging situations are those which give rich learning experience. Aristodemos shared a story which had to do with a

teachers' lack of classroom management skills, with students uploading videos and photos on the web with vulgarities and obscenities. He faced a dilemma illustrated in the following quotation:

“The news were publicised in no time and a disciplinary investigation was ordered by the Ministry. Looking back into his professional career there hadn't been any accusations from anyone. The dilemma was the following: to have the teacher dismissed [...] the headteacher had to accuse him officially. Six-seven headteachers from previous years had never expressed a negative comment about the specific teacher.”

Likewise, Apollonia stressed her consideration about how a headteacher should handle efficiently difficult situations like “a death of a student in a classroom or the fatal accident of a parent... what you should not do... you never know when you may face such situations and it is very important to know how to handle them”. Similarly, Demosthenes argued about decisions the headteacher must take which have a high risk, because of regulations. He referred to the situation of a serious injury of a student. He stressed his worries in the following quotation:

“Taking into consideration that it is forbidden to use a teacher’s car to take the student to the hospital, then in such a case I should call for an ambulance, but by the time the ambulance comes to the school it might be too late. Regulations [...] say you should inform parents. But parents might be at work or far away, and unable to come. The responsibility lies on the headteacher... what about my conscience? What if something happens to the student?”

Apollonia admitted that they need more preparation on how to handle a crisis or a conflict, for which as she claimed “no one trained us how to deal with such issues”. So, as a conclusion someone might argue that handling efficiently situations that are very uncommon and with high risk efficiently lies upon the headteacher’s personality. The emphasis on personality can be captured in the words of Isocrates:

“It has nothing to do with how much training you had or how many degrees you hold [...] the headteacher should have charisma. For example, to take initiatives, to take risks, to have a good approach, to be pleasant or strict as appropriate... so there are no standards, everything depends on the person, how he will implement what he has learnt.”

### *Self-directed learning*

“I don’t believe that we will ever find a system which will educate us well. What is left, from my judgment, is self-directed learning. I have the feeling that it is solely an obligation of each individual.” (Kallias)

The above is indicative of the motivation to learn. Self-directed learning refers to learning projects undertaken by individuals without the assistance of an instructor, with the purpose of learning something which is important for the individual.

Eudoxia suggested that as far as the content of the formal programme is concerned, the “theoretical part may arise through a self-directed learning process” and complemented by arguing that this depends on the individuals’ “interest”, “commitment” and “needs”. It is personal, individualistic and it concerns the self-directed learner. It is a self-development process. Miltiades stressed a word of warning that “the rate of acquisition of the offered knowledge varies between people”.

Reflecting is also a self-directed learning process as Chrysanthe argued. Recording reflections from practice in her professional diary helped her to improve:

“When you record your daily experiences, your thoughts, some bad moments you had... the time you

got upset, when you got sad and why, when you distressed others [...] you reflect through self-evaluation... and then through that you try to get better, to adjust, and to improve.”

## **Building school leaders’ professional identity**

This section outlines findings which emerged regarding headteachers’ perception of the way they build their professional identity including their views about their role and about the key qualities/characteristics for successful school leaders in Cyprus. Building professional identity is a developmental process which has to do with the school leaders’ conceptualisation of their role and understanding about the responsibilities which derive from headship, about the appropriate professional behaviour which should guide their actions as headteachers, and about a personal engagement for professional development through formal and informal ways to achieve the transition to the headteacher’s role.

Furthermore, professional qualities/characteristics including values, beliefs, attitudes and feelings are important aspects for a successful headship. This transition does not happen in isolation; instead it happens through interaction and socialisation of the headteacher with teachers, students, parents, with other headteachers or system leaders.

## **Leading role**

The participating headteachers in this research study, perceived their role as the most significant and crucial position in schools, which will lead the school either into improvement or failure. They stressed that their responsibility is high and everyone expects from them, that it is a hard and stressful job, because their decisions and actions affect people. They recognised that it is a complex role because they stated that leading a school is a multi-level leadership process which includes interaction with students, teachers, parents, other staff, and people from the Ministry in relation with change, with initiatives, with everyday problems, with complex issues and with difficult decisions they are forced to make.

The headteacher's leading role was seen differently by three participating headteachers in this study. They stated the following:

“There are some parents who do not understand school regulations [...] they come into a conflict with the school so as to keep their kids happy... so, the headteacher should try to inform them, to make them compromise... headship is a tough job.” (Isocrates)

“It is extremely charming and attractive to be a school leader [...] things are easy [...] surely it takes too much time [...] but I am calm, I control my temper, I



always listen and I do not get anxious with every single matter.” (Kallias)

“There were cases which in the end made me feel that I wanted to leave, that I couldn’t stand it anymore. I still have nightmares.” (Aristodemos)

The contradictions between the views of the headteachers which are presented in the above statements have obviously to do with the complexities of the school environment and with headteachers’ perceptions regarding their professional role and their commitment, which in any case affect them emotionally. Moreover, the headteacher should have the ability to demonstrate multiple roles because of complexity. Apollonia explained this by saying that the headteacher “has to act in multiple ways with issues involving either teachers, students, the ministry, assistant staff, the school building, parents... it’s a multi-level job”. The above statement reinforces the view that headteachers should be prepared to respond to the expectations, needs and demands of multiple audiences in multiple contexts.

The most demanding period of headship is the first year in post, as headteachers argued. During their first appointment, the novice headteachers have a tremendous field of demands and issues to attend to. The fact that they have limited experience in the post in combination with their demanding transition from the deputy-alpha-

head's role to the headteacher's role, which will need considerable time to develop, then what is evident is that they will either fail or learn to lead the hard way. The need to be well prepared is stressed emphatically by Aristodemos:

“Being unprepared is a disadvantage. The system throws us into the ocean telling us to swim [...] the difference between this role and my previous position as a deputy-alpha-head is huge; there is no similarity [...] when the time comes to take over the responsibility of the school, then the role changes. You are alone and everyone expects from you.”

A learning domain in their journey to build professional identity is the realisation of their role in terms of the responsibility and accountability they have, which as they stated is extremely high. Eutychia argued that “everything seems to be easy... but, when the time comes to take charge then you face a mountain of issues... and your stress level is high”. Likewise, Eudoxia admitted that “there is too much stress and responsibility puts a strain on you”. Demosthenes also argued about the issue of responsibility saying that “the deputies have no responsibilities; they have duties delegated by the headteacher and obligations, but the responsibility lies on the headteacher, and the headteacher is the one held accountable to the Ministry”. Apollonia explained why she was attracted to the

headteacher's role, but at the same time she expressed her worries.

Quoting her words:

“I enjoy being a headteacher because I can work and change the school culture, I can make changes, and I can initiate innovations [...] the only thing that scares me personally [...] is that at any time you may face responsibility issues and even if you are not directly involved you find yourself accountable.”

In contrast to this, Kallias stressed his optimistic view that “headship is not difficult when you are not afraid of responsibilities, when you have the courage to take difficult decisions and when you feel confident and efficient”.

Participating headteachers agreed that novice headteachers in their first appointment or even experienced headteachers who are transferred to a new school, will face dispute and challenges, mainly from teachers and parents; facing the “institutional hurdles of succession” (Gronn, 1999, p. 36). The newcomers need to prove that they are capable, that they care and that they are supportive. They have to employ a repertoire of identities positioning themselves in multiple ways so as to negotiate the complex expectations from everybody and build trust. Eutychia stressed that “people are barriers” and that “when the new headteacher arrives s/he will want to communicate a message, a vision... but s/he will face reaction,

because teachers do not cope with changes easily". She argued that the headteacher should try to find 'allies' between staff. She claimed that "if the headteacher finds support from the leadership team, then things will get better soon, or else s/he will need between six months to one year to convey her/his philosophy. But everything becomes smoother in the second year". Isocrates talked about leading by example as a mean to make others succeed in their own role. He argued: "The headteacher has to have worthy colleagues, and should engage them into leading by example, so as to make everyone meet the expectations of their role".

The headteacher will need to face successfully the existing school culture, which calls for tremendous effort and interpersonal skills so as to be able to convince, to make others follow her/his vision, to make them respect and honour their headteacher. The following statement from Herakleios revealed the above issue:

"Headteachers need approximately two – three years to be able to change [...] the school's culture. It will take some time for the teachers to accept the new headteacher, to appreciate him/her for what s/he is [...] time is also needed for the headteacher so as to be able to get familiar with her/his teachers [...] to infuse confidence and trust to them."

The headteachers stressed that to change the school culture for the better they need to build successful relationships with everyone. Herakleios emphasised on relationships between the headteacher and the staff in the following quotation:

“You have to be there for them, you have to be communicative, talk with staff, and be close. You need to have the ability to support them, to prove your abilities to them, so that they trust you and follow you. [...] You must also prove that you are honest, that you are sincere and that you are fair.”

Demosthenes argued that the teachers also need support in their teaching practices: “They need support in their pedagogy [...] in teaching and learning”. Likewise, Aristodemos stressed that the headteacher should be able to inspire teachers, support them so as to try initiatives in their teaching practice and accept that they might fail, without being negative about failure: “They should know that the headteacher will support them anyway [...] they might fail or make mistakes [...] but we want them to try, we want them to feel nice when they come to school, to feel at ease to enter the headteacher’s office”.

Apollonia supported the view that the headteacher should do whatever possible to infuse a positive school climate because “it will make the teachers feel well in their school and perform better”. Likewise Herakleios argued in favour of a good school climate

including the students: “If I can’t make students feel happy about coming to school, then I have failed”. Aristodemos supported further that “from the moment you feel that the students trust you – which is not easy because it is very difficult to earn their respect – but if it’s so, then they can do amazing things for you and their school”.

Knowing who you are and where you are going is something that the participating headteachers recognised as important for the development of a successful headteacher. Based on one’s personal and professional philosophy regarding education, based on values, beliefs and feelings, they stressed their commitment to lead change and lead their schools to success. Everyone stressed that they were visionaries, dedicated and loyal to their life mission. Communicating their vision to teachers and students was seen as a priority by everyone. Herakleios stressed that “vision should be defined by the school leader in collaboration with the teaching staff”. Kallias expressed that his vision includes students and teachers’ happiness and satisfaction, a “school with freedom, democratic, humanistic [...] and open to the society”. Similarly Eudoxia stressed that “the school mission is to educate students but also to build their moral, which is closely interwoven with learning”. Aristodemos emphatically expressed his vision saying that his efforts were “to give opportunities to all students [...] to reveal their potentials”. Demosthenes combined vision with citizenship, in a political statement. He stated:

“To succeed the goals of *paideia* [the rearing and education of the ideal member of the polis in ancient Greece], namely, to create students who will be good citizens of the Republic, is the most significant. Therefore, we emphasise on humanistic education to build democratic citizens.”

### **Leaders’ key qualities/characteristics**

Data from Phase Two gave rise to twenty-one qualities/characteristics (see Table 4.3, p. 118). Findings identified a total agreement on behalf of the participants on two key qualities/characteristics: *to take initiatives and risks* and *to inspire respect*. Even more important is that the two experienced headteachers in Cycle C categorised the quality *to take initiatives and risks* as their first choice and that all four participants categorise it on their top five, stating clearly its importance to them. As far as the quality *to inspire respect* is concerned, this was also chosen by all four of them. It shows that they value students’, teachers’ and parents’ opinion on them and on their headship, which definitely has an impact on their professional role.

These twenty-one qualities/characteristics are separated into two groups: the *professional identities* and the *technical skills* (Scribner and Crow, 2012). Ten *professional identities* and eleven *technical skills* were identified (see Table 5.2). Qualities/characteristics with

higher than one (1) level difference in the Likert scale between ‘developed through informal events’ and ‘developed through formal activities’ were categorised into the *professional identities* group, whereas the qualities/characteristics with lower than one (1) level difference in the Likert scale were categorised into the *technical skills* group.

**Table 5.2:** key qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders in Cyprus separated into professional identities and technical skills

professional identities
<div> 1.take initiatives and risks (+1.6)</div> <div>2.inspire respect (+1.6)</div> <div>4.have the courage to make difficult decisions (+1.6)</div> <div>6.not getting anxious or nervous (+1.5)</div> <div>9.be fair with people (+1.6)</div> <div>10.be enthusiastic (+1.9)</div> <div>13.face challenging circumstances efficiently (+1.3)</div> <div>15.admit mistakes (+1.6)</div> <div>18.be committed (+1.8)</div> <div>19.face dilemma situations efficiently (+1.2)</div>

*Note.* Numbers presented before the statements show the place of the qualities/characteristics in the questionnaire (see also Table 4.3, p. 118) Numbers in the parentheses show the difference between Informal versus Formal learning presented in Table 5.4 (p. 182)



One level difference was employed as a criterion because it is the difference between the overall means of the twenty-one qualities/characteristics in terms of the '*developed through informal events*' versus '*developed through formal activities*' results (see Table 5.4, p. 182).

Herakleios stressed that to be a leader requires certain qualities/characteristics which are developed in a life-long process during personal and professional life. In his words: "Without possessing these qualities it is difficult to develop them in training. Some skills might get developed, but you will never become a great leader." These *qualities* distinguished by Herakleios are definitely those which are grouped into *professional identities*, whereas the mentioned *skills* are those which are grouped into *technical skills* (see Table 5.2, p. 161). Quotations from the interviews from Cycle C about the key qualities/characteristics are presented in Appendix I.

## **Macro-level politics**

This section outlines findings which emerged regarding headteachers' perception of macro-level politics including their views about leaders' development policy in Cyprus. Macro-level politics seem to have a great impact on headteachers' professional development.

Informal learning contributes to the professional development of headteachers in various ways as described earlier in this chapter

answering the question “In what ways do school leaders learn how to lead?” Still, there is no central monitoring of these informal learning processes, but rather this is left to the individuals’ interest and/or access and/or willingness and/or enthusiasm. No one could claim that the situation as it is currently develops successful headteachers who will lead successful schools. On the contrary, the catholic criticism from the participants of this study towards the educational system and the provided training, call for immediate changes in leadership development in Cyprus.

What was apparent from the interviews was that there is a realisation from participants that the system lacks a leadership culture, which acts as a barrier to the development of headteachers in a holistic way. The most significant barriers mentioned were: (i) the lack of a holistic professional development, since training is provided only during the induction phase, without any preparation before the post or any continuous development after the first year, and (ii) that the provided training is inadequate given that it is mostly theoretical, which fails to connect theory with practice.

In this section the participants’ criticism towards the educational system and the provided training is presented first. Suggestions for the future are presented next.

## **Criticism: the system**

### *Centralisation and bureaucracy*

“There is a culture of centralisation from the Ministry of Education and Culture... a complete commitment to regulations, which is not the essence of schooling.”

(Kallias)

The centralisation issue was stressed by experienced headteachers in an emphatic way, since teachers are appointed centrally by the Educational Service Commission and the District Office, and the headteacher of the school has no power on these decisions. The following quotation from Herakleios revealed the problem from the appointment of an inadequate deputy-head:

“They appoint an inadequate deputy-head, and s/he will stay for five years before being transferred to another school. [...] The deputy-head is 55 – 58 years old and is ineffective, inadequate and the Ministry preaches that the headteacher of the school is responsible. Either I have to report the deputy-head’s inefficiencies to the Ministry or I must build a procedure to improve the deputy-head. But the system has left this teacher for 30 or 20 years without any improvement [...] these are the system’s weaknesses.”

The bureaucracy within the system was blamed by participants as a barrier for successful leadership, which as they claimed, does not help them to work as the leaders would like to become. As stressed by Demosthenes:

“The system forces us to be in our office because of bureaucracy and mundane routine administration, which keep us away from where we should be. Namely, near students infusing learning passion, near teachers spending time discussing about problems.”

### *Seniority*

In the Cyprus Educational System a teacher can apply for promotion only if s/he has served the system for several years. Therefore, this affects the age of those who will eventually be promoted to headteachers. Then, *seniority* (Pashiardis, 2004a) is a fact. Nereus argued that this is one of the system's weaknesses:

“They are promoted at an age and at a professional stage just before retirement. This is one of the major weaknesses, because when someone is promoted at the age of 59 [...] the issues of developing a vision and a strategic planning comes second on their list of priorities. [...] they pay attention to administration, not leadership.”

### *Selection*

It is evident that to have successful headteachers in charge of schools the system should have the procedures to identify and develop teachers with leadership characteristics. In Cyprus there is not such a selection procedure, which creates a problem when the time comes to offer promotion to deputy-alpha-heads. Deputy-alpha-heads must serve for a year in the position before being able to apply on their second year, to enter headship the year after. Nereus revealed that due to lack of a selection process in the stages of the teacher or the deputy, in which there is a larger audience, there is no actual selection of the next headteachers. In his words:

“A few years ago the number of available headships was larger than the number of the applicants. Thus, there was no selection at all.” (Nereus)

### *Let me be a leader*

Herakleios expressed his worry regarding leaders' and leadership development because he argued that there is no vision from the people who decide the policies: “With these people dealing with the development of the next headteachers, we can't develop leaders”. He also stressed that what novices need is to be networked with successful headteachers who will help them become leaders. Moreover, he claimed that the system is the most significant barrier in someone's struggle to become a leader:

“They have sent headteachers to give seminars to the newly promoted who do not believe in the headteacher as a leader; instead they act themselves as military commanders [...] This is because the system wants headteachers who will just do the job; not leaders, because leaders will challenge the system.” (Herakleios)

### *Development of school leaders*

In Cyprus during the induction phase of newly promoted headteachers a mandatory in-service training programme is offered. This is the only programme offered, which leads to the conclusion that there isn't any preparation before promotion to headship or any continuous professional development after the first year. Apollonia complained about the lack of preparation saying that “they throw you in the middle of the ocean and they ask you to swim ashore; they do not provide you with any support to deal with such a multi-task environment”. Kallias agreed that “the system does not prepare the new headteachers for headship”.

Nereus separated headteachers' development into three stages: (i) *prior promotion*, (ii) *induction*, and (iii) *continuous professional development*. He stressed that each stage has significance into the whole development, but also to the next stage. Specifically, he supported that the first stage provides aspirant leaders with professional knowledge and development, which will give them the

opportunity to realise if they like this job and prove if they are capable. He also stressed that during the induction stage:

“There is a process of adaptation where the emphasis is on the practical dimension. We are not interested in theory in this stage; rather we are interested in the practice of headship, so as to gain experience. This is the first stage of the professional, which is the induction in the job; the need here is to get the experience from others and this is the time for the mentor to transfer experience.”

Finally, Nereus argued that the third stage of continuous professional development has to do with “improvement needs and new facts from the educational field”. Lack of training during the first stage will eventually lead to problems during the second stage. For example, if theory in leadership is not embedded to the aspirant leaders during *prior promotion* stage, then a lack of theory during *induction* will be a reality. This might lead to integration of theory into *induction* stage, which changes the whole purpose of that specific developmental stage.

### **Criticism: the training**

Herakleios argued that “there is a need to find a new way, a new system to prepare headteachers” and he claimed ironically that “the Ministry preaches for an Academy for Leaders which has been in the

design process for several years now”. Moreover, Eutychia argued that the scope of the in-service training programme provided during induction phase is not to develop successful headteachers:

“It’s only a seven-eight month programme. Its purpose is to give some information so as to help headteachers in their headship; its scope is not to develop them holistically, which can’t happen in such a short period of time.”

#### *Practical instead of theoretical*

The participants stressed emphatically that the training they received was not what they needed, because emphasis was given on theoretical knowledge than practice. Therefore, they argued that training was inadequate and not successful. Aristodemos expressed his disappointment:

“I will re-phrase your question: Did the training you had as a newly promoted headteacher help you in any way for the headship role? No, it didn’t. What was the reason? [...] there is a need to change the delivery format. [...] those instructors presented theories from articles or from books. We had four meetings each month. The most essential part occurred in just three meetings in a school where a headteacher [...] shared



his experiences: he told us what he had experienced and what we should do.”

The two instructors agreed on the theoretical approach of the training. Elpis said that “the most significant criticism towards the programmes is that they were too theoretical and academic. They had no practical applicability”. Moreover, she stated that the participants argued that “nothing of what we have learned was actually broken down to meet the requirements, the practicalities and the special features that we find within the educational system”. Nereus explained that:

“The programme offers mainly theoretical knowledge than skills and practice. This is the main weakness. For example, which is the natural place to develop new headteachers? It’s the school. Unfortunately, there are no school visits this year.”

#### *Time and place of delivery*

The mandatory programme is offered during working hours for a day every week, from the beginning of the new school year on September up to April. The training is provided during working hours due to the Teacher’s Union demands. Two novice headteachers expressed their difference with the time of delivery stating also that they would prefer training to be at their school. Quoting their words:

“Being away from your school once a week when you have so many things to do... Let’s do the training in the afternoon.... Do you want to get into headship? Then you should devote time. Even before you apply, or during the summer after promotion.”

(Demosthenes)

“The biggest problem was that the training was provided during working hours. The headteacher’s mind is back at the school, even unconsciously.”

(Isocrates)

### *Content and delivery format*

Apollonia argued that some domains were absent from the programme, which as she stressed are very important for a successful headship. As she argued such a domain is “how to handle difficult situations or crisis situations or conflicts”. Demosthenes stressed also that “culture and school climate” was scheduled for November, which he considered wrong since it is very important to have this subject prior headship. He stressed that: “we should have had this subject before taking over headship, before we crashed our face into the existent school culture”.

Apollonia suggested that if the training is going to happen outside schools, which is the natural place of learning to lead, then the programme should move from lectures to case studies:

“Out of the school I would use practical approaches, case studies... For example, let’s take an incident, give it to four headteachers and ask them how they would handle it. Another group of four... and another group... Then we could have a discussion between groups, with the assistance of an expert professional as a facilitator, so as to come up with successful strategies.”

### *Instructors*

Elpis argued that the instructors are not engaged into a certain type nor a certain form of teaching. She indicated that “there is no central planning or monitory of the instructors because they are all external instructors in the majority of them”. She continued saying that “there is an outline and a handbook but there is no module description, what the content of each module should be, what the aims are”. Likewise, Nereus admitted that “the instructor should transfer his experience, not just scientific knowledge, because experience is more important in that level”.

## **Suggestions for the future**

### **Building leadership culture**

“When you sit behind the desk you behave like a student. Can we finish the lesson earlier without a

break? Can we leave earlier? [...] There is noise; you can't follow the instructors' lesson." (Demosthenes)

What Demosthenes revealed was that some of the participants in the training were completely apathetic. Their stance might have been the effect of certain facts. Firstly, because being active in the training is not a presupposition for the headship, secondly, due to the fact that there is no assessment incorporated into the programme, actually only physical presence counts, and, thirdly, because of the theoretical nature of the training which is not what they needed in the induction phase.

What someone would claim is that there is lack of leadership culture throughout the Cyprus Educational System. Building a leadership culture should be considered as one of the most crucial changes which are urgently needed. Still no one understands why nothing has changed all these years. If the vision is to have successful headteachers leading successful schools then changing the leadership culture would have proved valuable. Surely the system will not change in a day. Participants in the interviews suggested some practical improvements.

Demosthenes suggested that training for headship should be provided to the deputy-alpha-heads who are a step away from being promoted to headteachers and this training should be obligatory for those who wish to apply for headship. He argued: "Let's say you are a deputy-

alpha-head, you should attend the training in order to be eligible to apply for the post. Then you are promoted and you are already trained". He also argued that since the deputy-alpha-heads are promoted to headteachers before the end of the school year, they could attend training for preparation during the last month of the school year. As he stressed:

"June is a 'dead' month. Basically they have some duties, exams etc., but someone else could handle that. Since you got the promotion, then you can be at the Pedagogical Institute for a ten-day continuous preparation training, which will help you in September when taking headship." (Demosthenes)

Moreover, Aristodemos who had an apprenticeship relation with Apollonia, suggested that the promoted deputy-alpha-heads could have an apprenticeship with the retiring headteacher if the appointment is announced early. As he claimed:

"The same happened with Apollonia. We had our first meeting in June. [...] I suggested having her with me from the beginning of the new school year. I told her: You will come from the 1st of September. If you want you can take over from the 1st of September, and I will be accountable."

Likewise, Eudoxia suggested networking and sharing of experience between headteachers. Quoting her words:

“This year we have ten new headteachers [...] What I propose is that these headteachers could be the responsibility of one or maybe more, two or three experienced headteachers, so as to have the chance to discuss with them issues from practice; this would be a practical channel of sharing experience from the more experienced to the less experienced. And I believe that everyone would have benefited, because even the experienced could learn from those who are in the induction and adaptation phase.”

### **School-based learning**

What almost all participants stressed as a necessity was to turn the training into a school-based programme. Elpis stressed that this initiative could create more opportunities for successful experienced headteachers to get involved. She proposed:

“We have instructors in the programme that are active headteachers and they are highly qualified [...]. So, one suggestion was that a big part of this programme could become practical and school-based.”

Eudoxia also agreed with Elpis. Quoting her words:

“What we experienced through those seminars was that the most important part was the communication with fellow headteachers and school visits [...]. We should reinforce the practical part, meetings should be organised in schools.”

### **School autonomy**

School autonomy is the opponent of centralisation. If school autonomy is put into practice then there is strong evidence that the system could be forced to change. School autonomy could give the appropriate ground for the holistic development of the school leader, because centralisation is definitely holding back headteachers' development. Aristodemos argued about lack of autonomy:

“I do not have the autonomy I would like to have. If I had autonomy I would have decided not to have the same general yearly tasks which come from the Ministry.”

Decision making and autonomy were revealed by Herakleios who stressed that there is an issue of power and conflict because the System holds the headteacher solely accountable, but even for the simplest issues the headteacher must ask for permission from the Ministry. He argued that “the headteacher should have the power to

make decisions without being obliged to send written requests to the Ministry”.

### **Community of school leaders**

Headteachers in Cyprus use various informal ways to develop themselves so as to succeed in their role. Despite that, there is no community of school leaders developed yet. The only case of a community is when the headteachers are gathered for a formal meeting once a month. Two experienced headteachers had contradictory views regarding the effectiveness of these formal meetings: Miltiades had a negative view whereas Eudoxia was positive. Their statements are presented below:

“All headteachers have a meeting together [...] once a month, but this is only for organisational issues. The agenda is not open so as to give the chance to discuss problems we face in schools... [...] mostly what is a fact is that time is not enough.” (Miltiades)

“Headteachers present their personal experience in various educational issues which have as a subject the instructions from the Ministry, the endorsement of the yearly tasks, problematic situations we face in a daily base in schools, like students’ appearance, their absences etc. As these are presented, personal experiences and criticism is revealed.” (Eudoxia)



Elpis argued that during the training the year before the interview she taught a group of novice headteachers who were very well literate in computer software. Some of them were very enthusiastic discussing the possibility of an online community of practice between them. She stated: “They would very much appreciate a forum where they could actually sit together and discuss and coach each other.” During the school year 2012-2013 an online platform was incorporated in the professional development programme without successful engagement of participants in peer interaction. It was used mainly by instructors to post lesson material.

### **Phase Three quantitative data results**

In the following section data gathered from the quantitative questionnaire will be presented. These will be presented in two parts. Part A includes the participants’ views regarding ‘*Macro-level politics*’ which affect their professional development and consequently their learning to lead. Part B includes the participants’ views regarding the way the twenty-one qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders are developed through formal and/or informal learning.

The first part does not include the participants’ views regarding the scales ‘*Professional development of school leaders*’ and ‘*Building school leaders’ professional identity*’ because of low coefficient of reliability in the participants’ answers (Cronbach’s Alpha was lower than 0.70). An attempt to explain this should take into consideration

the participants in the quantitative survey; for example, when the participants were asked to reply on the statements regarding training on the theme *‘Professional development of school leaders’* the problem might have been that 45% of them were on their third to sixth year in the post, thus two to five years after the in-service training they participated in, a fact which might have had an effect on their responses explaining the presented inconsistency. Knowing also that the programme received some significant changes during the last years then this may explain this issue further. Table 5.3 below shows the coefficient alphas for the scales presented in the next section.

**Table 5.3:** Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient

Scale name	Scale Reliability
Macro-Level politics	0.738
Leading Relationships – Informal Learning	0.841
Leading Relationships –Formal Learning	0.819
Leading Decisions and Crisis Situations - Informal Learning	0.757
Leading Decisions and Crisis Situations - Formal Learning	0.834
Leading the Organisation - Informal Learning	0.743
Leading the Organisation - Formal Learning	0.805
Leading Knowledge and Understanding - Informal Learning	0.796
Leading Knowledge and Understanding - Formal Learning	0.856

**Part A: Macro-level politics**

Decisions from the Ministry of Education and Culture are considered very important for the development of the new headteachers in view

of the fact that the Cyprus Educational System is a highly conservative and highly centralised educational system (Pashiardis, 2004b). Thus, decisions are enforced from the centre to the periphery most of the time without using a needs analyses or any other evaluation procedure. In this section, results regarding *type and content of in-service training* and *continuous leadership development* will be presented.

### *Type and content of in-service training*

Through the headteachers' responses it became evident that headteachers in Cyprus prefer school based activities (*statement 16*,  $x=4.4$ ,  $SD=0.6$ ), the exchange of experience between them and experienced headteachers (*statement 14*,  $x=3.9$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ), and a mentoring scheme with an experienced headteacher as a continuous developmental activity (*statement 17*,  $x=3.8$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ). Furthermore, they expressed the view that the instructors should be people who had previously worked in secondary education and who can combine theory with practical matters they face (*statement 12*,  $x=4.4$ ,  $SD=0.7$ ). Moreover, they stated that the subjects taught in the training do not cover what is needed to support them in their headship (*statement 11*,  $x=2.8$ ,  $SD=1.0$ ). These findings come in contrast with the existing situation in Cyprus because the programme is mainly offered in premises away from schools and networking between experienced and novice headteachers is limited to one or two presentations from experienced headteachers before the beginning of the new school year in a meeting with Ministry inspectors.

### *Continuous leadership development*

The headteachers' overall views regarding continuous leadership development were also investigated. The results indicate that there are not many opportunities for participation in leadership programmes in Cyprus (*statement 1*,  $x=2.5$ ,  $SD=1.0$ ), that the system should prepare the deputy-alpha-heads for headship before promotion to headship (*statement 26*,  $x=4.2$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ), which is not the case since the offered programme for headteachers comes after promotion. They also expressed the view that promotions to headteachers should take place earlier and new headteachers should be appointed into their new school before the end of the current school year (*statement 28*,  $x=3.9$ ,  $SD=1.1$ ). Furthermore, the participants indicated that the System should find a way to identify future leaders from their early steps in education (*statement 27*,  $x=4.0$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ) and should develop them from early stages (*statement 32*,  $x=4.0$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ).

### **Part B: Formal and informal learning development**

The participants in the questionnaire were asked to respond to the key qualities/characteristics statements stating the degree to which each quality/characteristic is developed through formal and informal learning (definitions of formal and informal learning were given in the questionnaire, see Appendix E) from one to five in the Likert scale, with one (1) stating '*not at all*', two (2) choosing '*to some*

extend', three (3) selecting 'somewhat', four (4) stating 'to a great extend' and five (5) for 'absolutely' (see Table 4.5, p. 121).

The results of this part revealed a strong tendency of the participants towards informal learning (see Table 5.4).

**Table 5.4:** Difference between means of Informal versus Formal of Key Qualities/Characteristics of school leaders in Cyprus

ST	Likert Scale					INF	F	INF-F
	1	2	3	4	5			
1						4.2	2.6	+1.6
2						4.2	3.4	+0.8
3						4.1	3.3	+0.8
4						4.2	3.7	+0.5
5						4.3	2.7	+1.6
6						4.3	2.8	+1.5
7						4.3	3.5	+0.8
8						4.2	3.5	+0.7
9						4.4	2.8	+1.6
10						4.5	2.9	+1.6
11						4.4	2.8	+1.6
12						4.2	3.6	+0.6
13						4.5	2.6	+1.9
14						4.2	3.8	+0.4
15						4.5	2.7	+1.8
16						4.2	4.0	+0.2
17						4.1	4.1	0.0
18						4.3	3.8	+0.5
19						4.5	3.2	+1.3
20						4.5	3.3	+1.2
21						4.2	3.6	+0.6
Overall mean						4.3	3.3	+1.0

*Note.* Black line = participants' view regarding formal learning, Red line = participants' view regarding informal learning, ST=Statements, INF=Informal, F=Formal, INF-F=Difference between Informal and Formal. The qualities/characteristics are ordered as these are in Part B of the questionnaire.

In almost all statements the mean of the ‘developed through informal events’ was extremely high with the lowest mean being 4.1 and with the highest mean being 4.5, whereas there was also a difference from the means of the ‘developed through formal activities’ scale with the

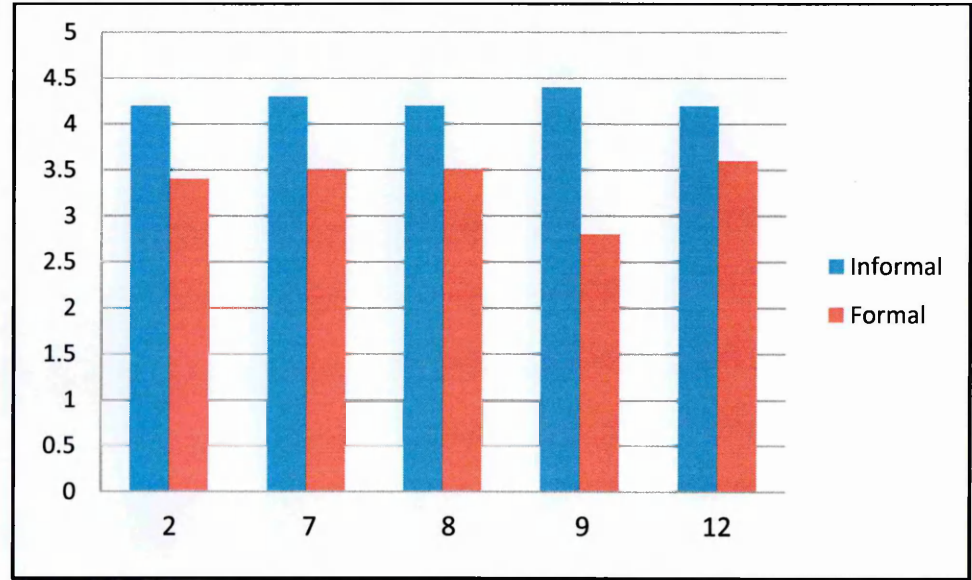
lowest difference being 0.2 (statement 16) and the highest difference being 1.9 (statement 13). Only in the case of 'statement 17: be able to organise school self-evaluation' was there an equal mean of 4.1. Particularly, the 'statement 13: be enthusiastic' quality/characteristic had the highest mean for 'developed through informal events' with 4.5 (SD = 0.7) when at the same time it had the lowest mean on the 'developed through formal activities' with 2.6 (SD = 1.2), creating as a result the highest difference between means with 1.9 in the Likert Scale.

Furthermore, the mean of all twenty-one key qualities/characteristics means of the 'developed through informal events' was 4.3, whereas the mean of all twenty-one key qualities/characteristics means of the 'developed through formal activities' was 3.3, thus presenting a difference of 1.0 level in the Likert scale, which is significant. Another important result is that the means of 'developed through formal activities' are far from one (1) 'not at all' in the Likert scale, which might show the importance of formal approaches in headteachers' training. The above may suggest that the training should employ a blended approach combining formal activities with informal events.

In the next section, results will be presented regarding the four scales consisting the Part B of the quantitative questionnaire which are the following: (i) Leading relationships; (ii) Leading decisions and crisis situations; (iii) Leading the organisation; and (iv) Leading knowledge and understanding.

### Leading relationships

The importance of development of ‘statement 2: have communication skills’ through ‘informal learning’ ( $x=4.2$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ) rather through ‘formal learning’ ( $x=3.4$ ,  $SD=1.0$ ) was presented by the participants. Likewise, ‘statement 7: listening to followers’ received a mean of 4.3 ( $SD=0.7$ ) in favour of ‘informal learning’ while in ‘formal learning’ a mean of 3.5 ( $SD=1.2$ ), the ability to ‘statement 8: manage public relations’ received a mean of 4.2 ( $SD=0.7$ ) in favour of ‘informal learning’ against 3.5 ( $SD=1.0$ ) of ‘formal learning’, the ability to ‘statement 9: inspire respect’ had a mean of 4.4. ( $SD=0.7$ ) for ‘informal learning’ though 2.8 ( $SD=1.0$ ) for ‘formal learning’ and, finally the quality/characteristic ‘statement 12: be people-oriented’ collected a mean of 4.2 ( $SD=0.8$ ) for ‘informal learning’ in opposition to a mean of 3.6 ( $SD=1.0$ ) regarding ‘formal learning’ (see Figure 5.5).



**Figure 5.5:** Leading Relationships

Note. Axis-x = position of the statements in the questionnaire.  
Axis-y = Likert Scale

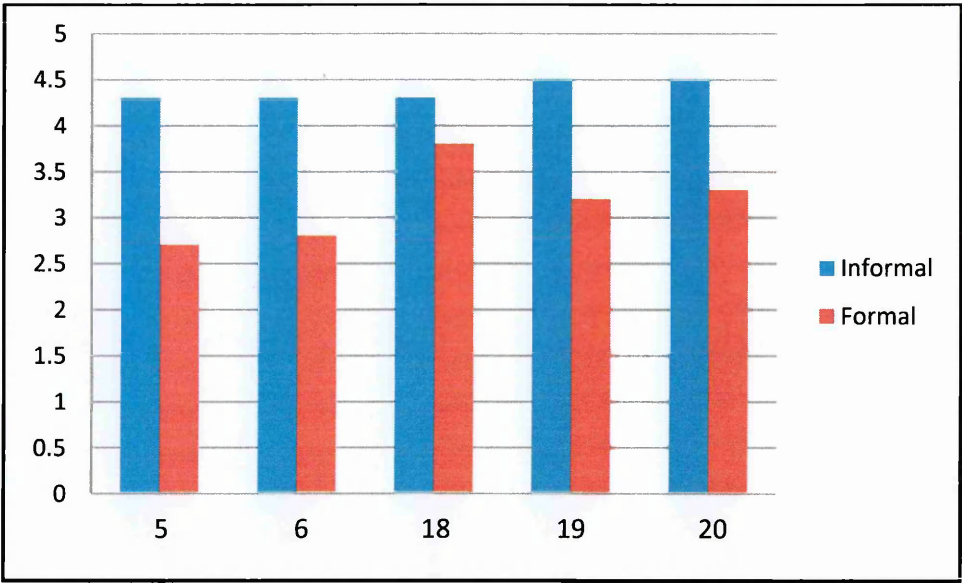
What these results might reveal is that 'leading relationships' require qualities which are more difficult to be developed in a formal process than using an informal procedure. Additionally, policy makers should consider including types of informal events in the formal programme changing the way of delivery for developing this kind of qualities/characteristics. Particularly, 'statement 9: inspire respect' has a difference of 1.6 between informal events versus formal activities, making the argument that there is a need to identify and employ the best way to develop it.

### **Leading decisions and crisis situations**

'Informal learning' scored higher than 'formal learning' in all five statements of this group (see Figure 5.6). Particularly, 'statement 5: have the courage to make difficult decisions' ( $x=4.3$ ,  $SD=0.7$ ) and 'statement 6: not get anxious or nervous' ( $x=4.3$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ) share almost the same difference from 'formal learning' with 1.6 and 1.5 respectively. Furthermore, 'statement 20: face dilemma situations efficiently' received a mean of 4.5 ( $SD=0.6$ ) in favour of 'informal learning' against 3.3 ( $SD=1.0$ ) of 'formal learning' and the 'statement 19: face challenging circumstances efficiently' collected a mean of 4.5 ( $SD=0.7$ ) for 'informal learning' in opposition to a mean of 3.2 ( $SD=1.1$ ) regarding 'formal learning'.



Leading decisions and crisis situations is a demanding domain which might create tension and emotional pressure because of the complexities and challenges of young people growing up in an individualistic manner, also taking into consideration that the headteachers take all responsibility of decisions on them. Therefore, the participants' view is that the above qualities/characteristics can be developed better using a blended learning model with priority given to informal ways.



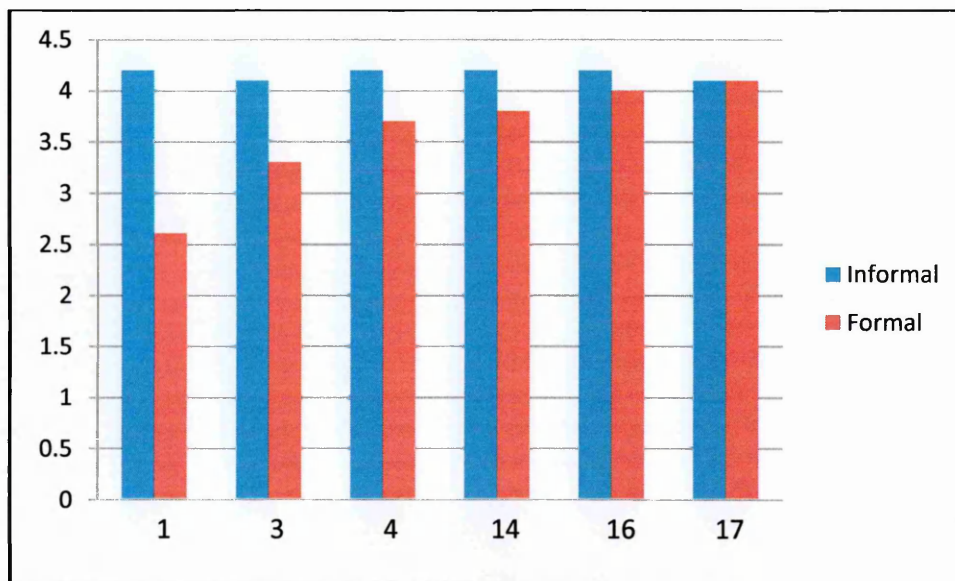
**Figure 5.6:** Leading decisions and crisis situations  
Note. Axis-x = position of the statements in the questionnaire.  
Axis-y = Likert Scale

Finally, ‘statement 18: be able to delegate responsibilities and duties efficiently’ scored a mean of 4.3 (SD=0.7) on ‘informal learning’ and a mean of 3.8 (SD=1.0) on ‘formal learning’ with only a 0.5 difference between them, which might state that the participants recognise that this characteristic could be developed in a formal approach with the

same success as in an informal environment or also that a blended approach of equal value could give maximum results.

### Leading the organisation

It is worth noting that participants gave equal means to both ‘formal’ ( $x=4.1$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ) and ‘informal learning’ ( $x=4.1$ ,  $SD=0.8$ ) for ‘statement 17: be able to organise school self-evaluation’ (see Figure 5.7).



**Figure 5.7:** Leading the organisation

Note. Axis-x = position of the statements in the questionnaire.  
Axis-y = Likert Scale

This was also almost the case in ‘statement 16: be able to develop a school improvement plan’ quality/characteristic (‘informal learning’ mean=4.2,  $SD=0.8$ , ‘formal learning’ mean=4.0,  $SD=1.0$ ). What is evident is that the participants gave an equal value to both, thus stating that they need guidance and support to design and implement

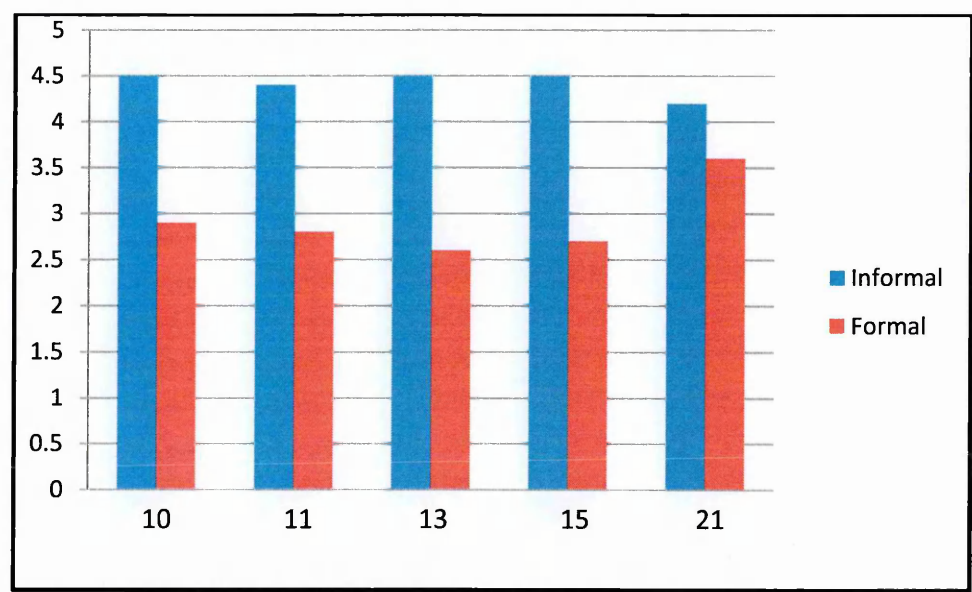
a school self-evaluation which will gradually lead to a school improvement plan. They might believe that they cannot do it without having expertise which they seek to get through formal learning activities.

In 'statement 14: be organised' quality/characteristic, the difference between means was as low as 0.4 and in 'statement 4: be efficient with time management' the difference was 0.5, which could indicate the equal importance of 'formal activities' and 'informal events' to develop these characteristics. Actually, in a bureaucratic system such as the Cyprus Educational System, this perception sounds reasonable. Furthermore, 'statement 1: take initiatives and risks' received a mean of 4.2 (SD=0.8) in favour of 'informal learning' while in 'formal learning' a mean of 2.6 (SD=1.1) and 'statement 3: create change for improvement' received a mean of 4.1 (SD=0.9) in favour of 'informal' against 3.3 (SD=1.1) of 'formal learning'. What is obvious is that for the two above qualities/characteristics the respondents believe that a more informal approach could work out better.

### **Leading knowledge and understanding**

Informal learning scored higher than formal learning on all five statements of this group (see Figure 5.8). 'Statement 13: be enthusiastic' was the quality/characteristic with the highest mean for 'developed through informal events' with 4.5 (SD=0.7) when at the same time it had the lowest mean on the 'developed through formal

activities’ with 2.6 (SD=1.2), thus creating the highest difference between means with 1.9 in the Likert Scale.



**Figure 5.8:** Leading Knowledge and Understanding  
Note. Axis-x = position of the statements in the questionnaire.  
Axis-y = Likert Scale

Likewise, ‘statement 15: be committed’ had a 1.8 difference between means (‘informal learning’ mean=4.5, SD=0.7, ‘formal learning’ mean=2.7, SD=1.2). The difference between ‘informal’ versus ‘formal learning’ means were also high in ‘statement 10: be fair with people’ and ‘statement 11: admit mistakes’. In both the difference was 1.6 with high means close to ‘absolutely’ (number 5 in the Likert scale) of 4.5 (SD=0.7) and 4.4 (SD=0.7) respectively for the ‘developed through informal events’ notion against means of 2.9 (SD=1.2) and 2.8 (SD=1.2) in the same order for the ‘developed through formal activities’.

These qualities/characteristics, according to the participants' responses, are likely to be developed better using more 'informal events' than 'formal activities', which is something the policy makers should take into consideration when designing professional development programmes. 'Statement 21: be democratic' collected a mean of 4.2 (SD=0.7) for 'informal' in opposition to a mean of 3.6 (SD=1.1) regarding 'formal learning'. This result might show that the headteachers acknowledge the importance of a high standard of knowledge and understanding of the law and the regulations governing the educational system and schools, in which the people acting (pupils, teachers, assistant staff etc.) have obligations and duties under the law, but they also have rights. Therefore, someone aiming to 'be democratic' in leading a school will definitely need expert direction and advice.

### **Independent Samples Test and Paired-samples *t*-test**

Independent samples test was conducted to understand whether the results from the responses of the participants differed (i) based on gender, and (ii) based on years in post, more particularly between novices – on their first year in headship – and experienced headteachers. Analysis of variables revealed no statistically significant difference in terms of the gender or the years in headship. More specifically, it seems that the views of the participants regarding 'macro-level politics', 'leading relationships', 'leading decisions and crisis situations', 'leading the organisation' and 'leading knowledge

and understanding' did not differ significantly between male and female headteachers in the Cyprus Educational System. Neither did views from novice and experienced headteachers reveal any significant difference.

Also, paired-samples *t*-test (Appendix H) was conducted to compare the means between the scales in Part B of the questionnaire regarding the formal and the informal element of the variables. The views of the school leaders regarding development through formal learning activities or through informal learning events of their responses means in the themes 'leading relationships', 'leading decisions and crisis situations', 'leading the organisation' and 'leading knowledge and understanding' revealed statistically significant difference in the scores for formal and informal learning ( $p < .001$ ). Specifically, results seem to suggest that participants believe that the qualities/characteristics for successful headship can be developed better through informal learning events rather than through formal learning activities in all above themes.

### **Phase Four confirmatory qualitative data collection**

Analysis of data from the interviews from Phase Four of this study with four experienced headteachers aimed at confirming or disconfirming tentative conclusions reached at previous data analysis stages. Findings from Phase Four interviews revealed confirmations and expansions to previous findings/results, whereas no

contradiction was identified from data, which adds to the trustworthiness of the previous findings/results. Direct quotations from the interviewees are used in this section as well.

## **Professional development of school leaders: Learning to lead**

### **Learning to lead – Formal learning**

During the four interviews with the experienced headteachers some very useful findings were revealed for the provided training, especially from Sappho and Philotheos. Sappho had two years of experience as an instructor and Philotheos was appointed as a mentor for four novice headteachers. Some ‘odd’ statements are presented below.

#### *Sappho’s experience*

During her participation in the programme she was asked from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute to work as an instructor, due to the fact that she was a PhD holder and at the same time a headteacher. She admits that the odd thing in their proposal was that they wanted her to present “good practices” which as she admitted she could not achieve, because she had limited experience as a headteacher. As she argued the contrast was that: “I gave a lecture, because this was what they asked from me [...] they do not consider the practical part of training”. What she stated further was that in her second year as a headteacher they asked her to present “good practices” about “school

self-evaluation". Having the experience from the previous year she stressed that:

"I tried to present some practical ways. They had never before heard anything regarding school self-evaluation; therefore, I had to start with a theoretical part and then some practical ideas one can use to develop an action plan."

She also argued that the headteachers should be prepared well before headship through training with emphasis on personality, on stamina and on character. She argued that "peoples' character and attitude should be criteria to reject them from headship. [...] it is unacceptable for someone to be promoted to headteacher just because of typical qualifications lacking commitment". She stated further that "there are no prescriptions in training. Years in headship will develop the headteacher. There are good suggestions [...] how you understand those and how you implement them is a personality issue".

### *Philotheos's experience*

In his fifth year in headship he was appointed by the Ministry as a mentor to four novice headteachers. He stressed that:

"We have an agenda from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute with the subjects for the discussions. We follow the agenda, but not dogmatically [...] during



the discussions we have an open dialogue and we also discuss rising issues.”

He also argued that “mentoring is a two-way process. You can benefit yourself if you are willing to listen”. Moreover, he stated that there was no training provided to the mentors. As he highlighted:

“I haven’t trained to be a mentor... If being a mentor means that there are techniques I should employ and that someone could teach me how, then yes. But if I can be an effective mentor or not it also depends on what I have to offer to the mentees.”

### **Learning to lead – Informal learning**

The findings from interviews during Cycle D confirmed the previous phase’s findings/results that learning to lead occurs mostly through shadowing previous headteachers and through sharing between headteachers, novices and experienced.

Xanthe argued that during her previous post as a deputy-alpha-head shadowing previous headteachers “I had gained fruitful experiences”. Sappho revealed that sharing between headteachers is important to be built in *trust* and *honesty*. She illustrated this in the following statement:

“To be able to share you have to be willing to speak honestly, to be ready to admit your mistakes, to be ready to share experiences without claiming that everything is ideal in your school. [...] you have to be able to discuss problems and through the others’ experiences to find the solution to your own problem.”

Philotheos admitted that “quite a lot of times I called another headteacher to share views, so as to see whether the way I handled an issue was the proper one” and he also claimed that “there is no secret, you know which school is performing well and the successful headteachers, then if I call that headteacher asking for an advice [...] I will benefit”.

This sharing between fellow headteachers was evident during the training programmes either as discussions in the taught lessons or during breaks. Xanthe confirmed Elpis arguing that “during breaks in the coffee shop [...] we shared experiences; and that was an excellent way of informal learning”. Likewise, Sappho referred to the same approach saying that during the training “we were all novice headteachers. We benefited the most from experiences transferred from school to school, admitting mistakes”. Theodotus expressed the importance of conversations with experienced headteachers during the first appointment into headship. This confirmed the preference of the respondents in the questionnaire for a mentoring scheme with an

experienced headteacher as a continuous developmental activity (*Statement 21*,  $x=3.8$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ).

## **Building school leaders' professional identity**

### **Leading role**

Findings confirmed the complexity of the headship which as they claimed is a stressful job. Philotheos argued that "headteacher's duties are multi-tasked. The headteacher is involved with every aspect of the school". Xanthe referred to the "loneliness" of the headteacher. "You are alone and you have to take the decisions and you have to dare". In addition, Sappho stressed that she tried to build successful relationships even if she suffered inside:

"I could lose control in a moment of pressure from stress. I was at that situation many times [...] I suffer inside, but I never break the interpersonal relations part, because I see how important it is."

Theodotus agreed with Aristodemos that the most demanding period of headship is during induction. He argued that "always in the first year as a headteacher you are lost trying to keep up with every single issue the school faces and with all the role duties, before being able to handle these duties". Sappho agreed also that:

“You have learning experiences happening every day, because it’s a job with many challenges. If you [...] always have your eyes open [...] you learn continuously using informal ways.”

Xanthe revealed that when her colleague deputy-alpha-head was thinking of applying for headship he asked for her opinion. She gave him a straight answer:

“You are not made for this post, I told him [...] because headship requires strong nerves and you are too sensitive, you need to be ready to face conflicts and to take difficult decisions [...] He lacked some leadership characteristics [...] once, while he was replacing me [...] he had a difficult situation to handle and he failed; it turned to chaos.”

Philotheos confirmed Aristodemos’ claim that there is a significant difference from the deputy-alpha-head’s role to the headteacher’s role. He stressed that there is a gap and a transition phase. He argued that “you can ask your deputy-alpha for an opinion, but no one can realise [...] the demanding duties and the responsibility of the headteacher”. Moreover, he argued that during a critical incident with an anonymous phone call to the police that there was a bomb in the school building when he was away for a district meeting, the deputy-alpha-head who was replacing him didn’t take up

responsibility of the actions. “The deputy-alpha called me right away asking what to do; he didn’t take the responsibility... he transferred it to me. [...] Thus, when I ask another headteacher for an opinion, I have on my mind that her/his answer is based on responsibility.” Likewise, Xanthe confirmed Aristodemos’ claim. She argued:

“It’s not the same to be a deputy-alpha-head replacing the headteacher from being the headteacher. The responsibility is on the headteacher. I used to say that as a deputy-alpha I felt the burden of responsibility, but this is not the case. I was in charge of everything, but I slept calmly at night.”

Findings confirmed that a novice headteacher in the first headship or even an experienced headteacher transferred to a new school will face dispute and challenges. Sappho explained that:

“Context is different, the culture is different, and peculiarities are different [...] Being well trained will help you interpret situations and utilise what you have learned in formal training with what you have learned informally, so as to be able to give the best solutions.”

## **Leaders' key qualities/characteristics**

The twenty-one leaders' qualities/characteristics were presented to the participants, firstly as a list, and secondly in the form of Table 5.4 (p. 182), during Cycle D interviews. Participants confirmed that the qualities/characteristics list is very comprehensive, that these qualities/characteristics are considered of great importance to build a successful leader and that some of those are developed better in an informal environment, whereas others could be developed better in a formal setting.

Sappho identified that "these are twenty-one very important characteristics...they are not ranked hierarchically, surely because every headteacher could rank them differently based on experiences and on the leadership model one follows". She also pointed that "some of these qualities are taught and some are innate and are being developed" and that "some of these characteristics are obtained through a formal activity [...] but in their greatest degree these are obtained through informal learning and from the development of qualities you already have and these [...] construct your personality." Philotheos stressed also that:

"The only characteristics you can teach are: to develop a school improvement plan and to organise a school self-evaluation. In the sense that: you need to have some skills so as to be able to build an

improvement plan. But also in developing this plan... planning is in the mind, in vision and I am aware that these are not taught qualities. [...] Can you teach someone to have the courage to make difficult decisions? [...] This comes with the years in post.”

In the same way, Theodotus was thinking-aloud about the difficulty to develop some of the presented qualities/characteristics, namely the *professional identities* group. He stated:

“How can ‘being enthusiastic’ be developed? We should agree that it is difficult to develop someone to be enthusiastic because this is something which is innate. [...] you can’t just point a gun to teachers to change their character. In training what could be done is to present enthusiastic school leaders.”

Philotheos argued that enthusiasm is connected with leading by example. He stressed that:

“You definitely need to be enthusiastic but at the same time you should work harder than everyone, so as to give the right example; then they feel embarrassed to be left behind.”

Sappho argued that the interpersonal relations factor has the most important impact on a successful headship. She stated that:

“Regarding interpersonal relations [...] this is one of the most leading dimensions a headteacher should take into consideration [...] for me this is the key. The most difficult problems a headteacher could face are those having to do with peoples’ character.”

Theodotus interrelated interpersonal relations with the headteacher’s vision. He stated that:

“A visionary headteacher [...] to succeed [...] should make teachers to love him. And how will s/he accomplish this? If s/he is fair and at the same time protective against any outside force aiming at teachers [...] then you build allies who are overreaching, who are engaged in your vision.”

## **Macro-level politics**

### *The system*

The extensive criticism from the participants during the first three phases for the educational system and for the provided training was confirmed from the findings in Phase Four. These confirmed that macro-level politics, which construct the context and the culture of



the educational system, could act as barriers or levers in developing successful school leaders.

System centralisation and bureaucracy are considered as the most significant barriers in the Educational System. Sappho stressed that:

“The system does not facilitate your development [...] on the contrary, when you become a headteacher you enter a certain context in which you are obliged to act, and the system blocks your creativity because it is directive and because of bureaucracy.”

Seniority was identified as another barrier. Theodotus argued that the present teachers' evaluation system is false, because through the years in service everyone ends up with top grades. Then, by the time they apply for headship they all have the same grades. Therefore, this fact misleads the selection of teachers with leader's characteristics. Theodotus argued about the need to select the right people:

“How would you be able to select those teachers with leader's characteristics? [...] To direct education into improvement you should have the right people in leading positions. [...] You should choose the right leaders, those who can engage teachers in their vision; those who can be innovators.”

### *The professional development programme*

Participants confirmed findings from previous phases that the received training did not meet their expectations, that it was too theoretical and that in contrary what they actually needed was to deal with practical issues so as to gain complete understanding of their role. Sappho stressed that:

“After promotion the system sends you once a week to be trained ... you leave your school to participate in a theoretical training, without any practical application. Therefore, you are alone; you swim alone [...] your personality and your experiences [...] will help you lead.”

Moreover, Theodotus agreed that “the practical part of such a programme is missing”. Philotheos, in line with Demosthenes, stated that “five years ago the training was 99% theoretical. Nowadays, it has become a bit more practical with the addition of the mentoring”. Therefore, he acknowledged the improvement efforts to meet the participants’ needs. Xanthe also criticised the provided training because the lessons taught were not useful. She argued that what she favoured were the “opportunities to exchange experience with fellow headteachers, because we had different experiences at the beginning of the training and different after six months.” The above findings confirm results of the type and content of the offered training showing that headteachers prefer school based activities (*Statement*

16,  $x = 4.4$ ,  $SD = 0.6$ ) and that they benefited most by exchanging experience between them and experienced heads during induction (*Statement 14*,  $x = 3.9$ ,  $SD = 0.9$ ).

Xanthe stressed the ineffectiveness of instructors from the university, coming into a complete agreement with Demosthenes. She stated that “the most useless lessons were taught by academics giving prescriptions without any prior experience from secondary education”. The above confirmed the statement in the questionnaire that the instructors should be people who had previously worked in secondary education and who can combine theory with practical matters they face (*Statement 12*,  $x=4.4$ ,  $SD=0.7$ ).

Philotheos confirmed Nereus who identified a gap since there is no preparation before headship. He argued that:

“It is oxymoron; you take over the headship of the school and training starts one week after. [...] The first fifteen days are the most difficult days for the school to get organised. If you do not have experience how are you going to make it? [...] Surely, the training programme should be provided prior to appointment and not after.”

### *Suggestions*

Aristodemos's suggestion that the promoted deputy-alpha-head should have an apprenticeship relation with an experienced headteacher was also supported by Philotheos, who stated: "During the training programme the headteacher should be appointed for some days in a school next to another headteacher to see in action those things which no preparation programme could ever teach".

The necessity to turn training into a school-based programme developing the next headteachers in schools from the deputy's post was proposed from Eutychia. In line with the above proposal, Sappho stated some preconditions:

"You can develop as a leader from the deputy-head post if you have a supportive headteacher giving you enough autonomy, delegating important duties to you. [...] if you have the qualities then you develop further to build your leadership profile."

The above statement comes closely with the statements in the questionnaire that the system should find a way to identify future leaders from their early steps in the educational field (*Statement 27*,  $x=4.0$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ) and that it should develop them from early stages (*Statement 32*,  $x=4.0$ ,  $SD=0.9$ ).

Lack of autonomy, identified in the interviews from Aristodemos and Herakleios, was also mentioned by Theodotus. He argued that the Ministry preaches for autonomy “but they want the school leader to obey and follow their rules”. He also blamed some headteachers because they do not try to earn autonomy: “many headteachers do not know how to handle autonomy. Rather, with any minor incident they call the district office or the Ministry asking: What shall I do?”

The formal meeting which is organised once a month is a first step for the development of a community of leaders. Theodotus shared Miltiades’s negative opinion for this formal meeting stating that: “we share views [...] but time is limited for everyone to express their opinion. [...] The scope of the meeting is informational and directive from the Ministry.” Xanthe suggested building a network of schools. She reflected: “Why should headteachers gather all together? We could arrange small regional meetings.”

## CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings presented in Chapter Five. Each research question is addressed in turn with the intention of responding in depth through the findings. By doing so, this chapter (i) provides a framework, to reflect the new knowledge, (ii) it presents and explains a proposed Formality – Informality model, and (iii) it presents a blended-learning model for the design and implementation of a professional development programme for school leaders.

### Learning to lead

*In what ways do school leaders learn how to lead?*

Data strongly indicate that secondary education school leaders in Cyprus learn to lead in relation to both formal and informal ways. These are discussed next.

#### *Formal learning: The professional development programme*

Even though it is clear from the participants' responses that they consider their participation in the mandatory formal professional development programmes inadequate to prepare them for headship, they consider it as the only form of formal preparation available to

them. Regardless of this, they criticised considerably the training provided by arguing that it is too theoretical and of no use in relation to their practice. These findings concur with Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011a, p. 75) who reported that “in participants’ views, the programmes were too theoretical, had no practical nature, and were not made part of their everyday life in their individual schools”.

What participants in this study stressed was that the current formal training programme offers them knowledge which they could develop themselves through self-directed learning, especially if they had a facilitator in a mentoring relationship. The importance of mentoring as a personalised form of professional development is well supported by Nicolaidou and Petridou (2011b, p. 732):

“Participants indicated that in-service programmes need to include a mentoring scheme as well. It is considered very important by newly promoted headteachers and deputies to have experienced colleagues next to them who will provide them with support, with whom they will discuss school issues in a friendly and informal manner and who will be for them a constant source of information as they have been in similar situations before.”

Similarly, Duncan and Stock’s (2010, p. 307) findings reveal that the majority of the participants in their study, considered mentoring

important for novice (96.88 %) and also for experienced headteachers (79 %).

Participants in this study referred extensively to the existing mentoring scheme, as part of the mandatory development programme. They argued that trust, confidentiality and respect, openness and value of sharing, should be embedded in a mentoring relationship and in sharing experience between headteachers so as to give the chance for learning to lead to occur between novice and experienced school leaders or also between fellow headteachers. These findings agree with those of Barnett and O'Mahony (2008, p. 235) who state that: "for mentoring [...] processes to succeed, solid relationships based on trust, confidentiality, and mutual respect must be developed between partners".

At this point, it is worth to explore further particular elements of a mentoring scheme such as 'group' trust and confidentiality. First, it can be argued that the more people you involve in a mentoring relationship the more intensified are the problems of establishing trust and confidentiality between the mentor and each mentee. Moreover, the group might have an effect on the content and the depth of the discussions. In contrast, group mentoring may resolve the problem of the selection and matching of mentoring pairs.

Besides, for the pilot phase of the group mentoring initiative mentors were appointed centrally by the Ministry of Education and Culture.



As the mentors' participation was not voluntary, one can argue that this may lead to lack of commitment on their behalf to assist novice headteachers. Furthermore, the lack of mentors' training is another issue for further discussion. The providers of the training invited the appointed experienced headteachers for a half-a-day seminar to inform and guide them regarding the requirements of the role and the expectations from the Ministry, which was surely inadequate for the preparation of those experienced headteachers (i) to conceptualise the mentor's role and (ii) to develop strategies needed to support the role's demands. The importance of training of the mentors is well documented in literature. Barnett and O'Mahony (2008, p. 240) inform us that:

“Training should focus on how to use developmental analysis strategies, develop growth plans, and encourage reflective practice. Observation, communication, listening, and feedback skills also should be highlighted and program's needs to address organizational norms, values, and expectations in order to provide mentors with a common language and understanding about the process of mentoring.”

Duncan and Stock (2010) further suggest that:

“Rather than setting up formal mentoring programs, which can be time consuming and expensive and

depend on careful matching of mentor to mentee, districts can promote principal collaboration and collegiality to form informal support networks. Such networks require creating a district climate of trust and a culture that focuses on resource sharing rather than interschool competition.”

(Duncan and Stock, 2010, p. 307)

### *Informal learning: Networking*

The headteachers in this study argued that they facilitate their learning through networking between experienced and novice headteachers, something they actually do in a small scale with headteachers who are friends and relatives or headteachers they have worked with in the past; in these cases there is an ease to discuss without any confidentiality issues arising. This is also highlighted by Pashiardis (2004b, p. 664). He argues that “for some principals a beneficial source of training is the good fortune of having worked with good and supportive principals and the chance this gives to learn from them”.

These networks could be characterised as *informal communities of practice* (Wenger, 1998) since they are non-institutional and they are not developed intentionally from the providers of the training; instead, these communities of practice between experienced and novice headteachers seem to emerge (Busher et al., 2014) from the novice headteachers’ needs to get professional help, or they seem to

occur naturally (Mittendorff et al., 2006) as a natural supportive mechanism from experienced to novice headteachers. Since the experienced were in the novices' position, they understand their situation and also their own contribution. Definitely, to have successful informal communities of practice the key element is trust; without it the community can not exist. Then, through legitimate peripheral participation novice headteachers learn practices and build their identities (Lave and Wenger, 1999), which will lead them to a more successful headship.

Informal networks were also identified by Daresh and Male (2000, pp. 97-98). In their comparative study between British and American headteachers the authors argued that "in both settings, respondents tended to look toward professional colleagues in neighboring schools, LEAs or school districts for personal support". Also, Crawford and Cowie (2011) who researched for three years Scottish novice headteachers participating in the Scottish Qualification for Headship programme state:

"Over a year later, these informal networks were still maintained through email and telephone contact and occasional meetings, but the networks have become social networks and fell well short of what can be characterized as communities of practice."

(Crawford and Cowie, 2011, p. 183)

Bush and Glover (2014) conceptualise networking or clustering between headteachers from different schools as the *System leadership* model, which extends headteachers' remit beyond their own school, in a struggle to bring "a wider range of leadership experience and expertise to help in addressing educational challenges and problems" (Bush and Glover, 2014, p. 567). They also claim that "this model is underpinned by the notion that values can be shared across groups of schools" (Bush and Glover, 2014, p. 563). The importance of networking and collaboration between headteachers from different schools, even from different districts, is highlighted by Fullan (2005, p. 94) who states that through these processes "the sense of community and commitment enlarges. One's identity to a larger common purpose amplifies [...] the collective capacity to system think, and thus to system change, is advanced".

#### *Informal learning: Reflection*

Networking between experienced and novice headteachers raises their reflections helping them identify role expectations, abilities and strengths, weaknesses and challenges and how to overcome. By reflecting on their personal and professional self, headteachers can develop their professional learning. It is what Gronn (1999, p. 69) argues of "a developmental self [...] as constantly becoming and as having been". Therefore, reflecting is seen as an important self-evaluation process, which provides fruitful learning outcomes. Zimmerman (2011) argues:

“Principals lead their schools through learning, beginning with their own learning. Principals need to identify which of their attitudes, behaviors and beliefs might help or hinder their own professional learning and the effectiveness of change initiatives in their schools. The first step in principals’ learning might be to reflect on their unproductive behaviors.”

(Zimmerman, 2011, p. 109)

Schön (1983) distinguishes between “reflection-in-action” which is situated in the context of action and “reflection-on-action” which occurs after the action. Bond (2011, p. 2) argues that reflection situated in action “emphasizes its practical nature and potential usefulness for professionals”. The headteacher should be ready to respond to a situation if an immediate decision is needed; therefore reflection-in-action is a process employed so as to help make the best decision under circumstances, adjusting the action taken during the incident. This is a process which is itself a learning event of creating meaning. Schön (1983, p. 68) supports the above arguing that “when someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context”.

Despite the importance of reflection-in-action, Schön (1983, p. 61) warns that “as a practice becomes more repetitive and routine, and as knowing-in-practice becomes increasingly tacit and spontaneous, the practitioner may miss important opportunities to think about what he

is doing” and therefore he draws “into patterns of error which he cannot correct”, which gradually may lead to decisions that “do not fit the categories of his knowing-in-action”. This comes to an agreement with participants of this study who claimed that not every incident is the same like a similar other they faced before, and that each time they need to investigate all parameters of a situation before final decision is taken.

In a situation where an immediate action is needed, what might occur is the use of tacit knowledge which directs one’s actions without explicitly being aware of this knowledge. Swartz and Perkins (1989, p. 52) described this as “tacit metacognition”, which is unconscious thinking about a strategy or decision making. It is the *integrative learning*, Bennett’s (2012) extension on Schugurensky’s conceptual model. Eventually, reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action offer the grounds for “profound learning” (West-Burnham, 2009, p. 14). Participating headteachers in this study stated that they use both forms of reflection. It depends on the importance of the case and urgency of actions whether they will decide in-action or choose to postpone for specific reasons. Mostly, they use reflection-on-action which allows complete examination of each case.

#### *Informal learning: Socialisation*

Participants argued that learning to lead also occurs through a socialisation process during various interactions. Participants stated that by having experiences from different schools in their long

teaching career and also from various management posts in different schools – since every promotion comes with a transfer to a new school – helped them build understanding and conceptualise the demanding role of the headship through a socialisation process. Moreover, novice headteachers claimed that sharing with other novice headteachers was also of worth since they have different experiences from other school environments. It is the *variety versus similarity* concept described by Crow (2006, p. 321) where the degree of learning experiences “impoverish or enrich the experience and ability of the new principal to work in a complex, ambiguous, and diverse environment”.

Weindling and Dimmock (2006, p. 334) citing Merton’s (1963) socialisation theory, argue that socialisation is constituted by two overlapping phases:

- (i) *Professional socialisation*, which involves learning what it is to be a headteacher, prior to taking up the role, from personal experience of schooling and teaching and from formal courses; and
- (ii) *Organisational socialisation*, which involves learning the knowledge, values, and behaviours required to perform a specific role within a particular organisation after appointment.

Organisational socialisation begins upon appointment and is specific to the context of the school. The “how things are done here” (Crow,

2007, p. 52) view is evident in the first months of the headship. The new headteacher learns to make sense of the new environment, creates interpersonal relations with school stakeholders, learns to manage ambiguous situations and is gradually stabilised in the new position (Pashiardis and Brauckmann, 2008).

An experienced headteacher stressed that due to continuous transfers of the personnel there is a nonstop process on behalf of the headteacher to initiate newcomers into the school environment, into the processes, into norms, values and vision, which is a stressful and time consuming process of organisational socialisation. Bush (2011, p. 138) supports the above, stating that “individuals bring their own values and meanings to their work and interpret their roles in different ways according to their beliefs and experience”. Therefore, the headteachers have to face not only their own socialisation process, but to facilitate the socialisation of others as well. It’s a negotiation and bargaining process of work-related values, beliefs and goals between the headteacher and the teachers (Bush, 2011) through their interactions in particular situations (Giddens, 1991; James et al., 2015), which will lead them “to construct and reconstruct the cultures of the communities or the organizations of which they have membership” (Busher, 2006, p. 71). The above processes involve issues of influence and power in a struggle to form a collective identity (James et al., 2015).



Stoll (2013, p. 232) argues that for headteachers to succeed in developing a learning community, they need to promote “evidence-based learning conversations” between them and their followers, so as to “reflect and challenge their existing practice; to rethink what they know and do”, which involves the negotiation of trusting relationships. Then, mutual and reciprocal relationships might create a leader’s reliance on followers, with influence stemming not only from the headteachers, but also from the teachers towards the headteacher (Anderson, 2004).

Internationally, organisational socialisation is mostly addressed successfully through an *apprenticeship model* (Browne-Ferrigno and Muth, 2006; Crow, 2006; Scribner and Crow, 2012) using the “authentic workplace” (Huber, 2008, p. 171) since “some skills cannot be taught through talk alone” (Bennett, 2012, p. 27). Rogers (2003, p. 31) argues that “it is not through the formalised learning that individuals come to be activists or reflectors, to be theorists or experimenters; rather, it is through the unconscious learning which goes on in all situations”. He also claims that “one objective of formalised learning is to lay down some elements of tacit knowledge and comprehension as well as more conscious learning and to provide cues and structures to access that tacit knowledge” (Rogers, 2003, p. 31). Similarly, Athanassiou and Nigh (2000) argue that there is a need for tacit knowledge to become explicit, so as to be transferable. Moreover, they claim that “the transfer of tacit knowledge depends on the credibility of the transferor because tacit knowledge rests in the

transferor's deeper awareness of the meaning of communicable details" (Athanassiou and Nigh, 2000, p. 474).

In Cyprus there is not any policy in favour of such relationships; rather what is evident is that aspiring leaders learn to lead by shadowing their headteachers in an informal manner. It is a process situated into a long teaching career (Gronn and Ribbins, 2003) before applying for promotion; the "seniority" (Pashiardis, 2004a) found in the Cyprus Educational System.

As detailed in Chapter Five, an unusual event of a two-month informal apprenticeship took place in a high school between a novice and a retiring headteacher. These two months were a fruitful learning period for the novice because she was next to an experienced headteacher: shadowing, discussing, acting, getting familiar with the teachers, the administration, the parents' board, with students; all these helped her to get socialised into the culture, values and norms of the school from a non-threatening position. The "stage 1 – entry and encounter" (Weindling and Dimmock, 2006, p. 336) of the socialisation process was completed without actually being into the headship; it was a period with no pressure and no stress.

## **Contribution of informal learning**

*In what ways can informal learning contribute to the professional development of school leaders?*

This research study revealed that the ways through which informal learning can contribute to the professional development of school leaders are (i) familiarising with the leading role, and (ii) developing their leadership characteristics/qualities.

### *Leading role*

Data seem to strongly indicate that informal learning events and processes are those which contribute to the holistic development of the school leaders in a more comprehensive way, than formal activities alone during the professional development programme. It is therefore clear that participants recognise their need for development during processes of organisational socialisation. This involves the understanding of the headteacher's role and the learning of the knowledge, values, and behaviours required performing the role; is the construction of their *professional identity* (Gronn, 1999).

When promoted into headteachers climbing up on the top of the school pyramid they realise that they are alone in a very complex, demanding and stressful post, because everything stems from the headteacher who is held accountable for everything. Gronn (1999) informs us that with appointment to more senior leadership positions "comes even greater responsibility and accountability, more

confidential information, increased visibility, a greater likelihood that one will be the object of scorn and criticism, and [...] the feeling of being constrained to pretend that all is well and to try to keep up appearances” (Gronn, 1999, pp. 181-182). Thus, the headteacher should be in a position to negotiate the complex expectations from stakeholders in different levels and overcome difficulties.

There is research evidence from the literature which support these findings. Daresh and Male (2000, p. 99) argue about the “alienation, isolation and frustration” of those leading schools, which might lead them to failure “to reconcile their identities with their job and had either taken the decision to retire early, resign, or had experienced long periods of stress-related illnesses” (Day et al., 2006, p. 609); it is Day and Bakioglu’s (1996) ‘Disenchantment’ (from stress and from losing control), or Gronn’s (1999) ‘Divestiture’ (as retirement processes) developmental phases. Moreover, Daresh and Male (2000, p. 98) inform us of constraints in dealing with relationships with the staff and between staff:

“A continuing issue faced by all who take on the duties of campus leadership remains the prevailing sense of isolation from others. The fact is that headteachers and principals are and will remain the ‘boss’ of their schools; they will serve as final arbiters in many disputes where winners and losers emerge within their staffs.”

Furthermore, Weindling and Dimmock (2006, p. 326) studying newly appointed headteachers in England, Scotland and Wales over a period of twenty years, came to the conclusion that “beginning a headship [...] for the first time is an exciting, exhilarating, but complex and difficult experience”; a “hot seat”. Additionally, Duncan and Stock (2010, p. 295) stress the complexity of the role arguing that headteachers “require high levels of communication and relationship-building skills as they negotiate the needs of students, parents, teachers, district office officials, unions, and state and federal agencies”.

Data strongly indicated that informal learning through organisational socialisation can support school leaders in addressing the complexity of their role through minimising the negative effects of issues like stress. Complexity of the role and raising demands are seen as a stressful experience for every participating headteacher in this study, especially for the novices. Research in Cyprus revealed a high proportion of headteachers reporting a considerable amount of occupational stress (Englezakis, 2002; Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis, 2006). Englezakis (2002) found that the top four sources of headteachers’ stress were the following: (i) reprimanding staff; (ii) managing a teacher’s absence; (iii) coping with a shortage of well-qualified teachers; and (iv) taking on too much responsibility. These four sources were also identified in the interviews’ data in this research study; especially the ‘taking on too much responsibility’ was

found in every single interview. Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis (2006, p. 112) suggest that:

“Within this context, occupational stress should be confronted by headteachers as a test that will lead them to professional maturation and as a result it should be regarded as a creative challenge which can lead through its proper management to productive results.”

A gap between the roles of the deputy-alpha-head and the headteacher was revealed from this study. Despite the fact that the deputy-alpha-heads occasionally replace the headteacher, this is a completely different role from actually being the headteacher of the school. Data seem to indicate that transition to the headteacher's role could only occur during their induction throughout organisational socialisation. One has to be in the post to understand its nature in depth. This gap is what Daresh and Male (2000) refer to as the '*culture shock of the transition*'. They claim that nothing could prepare their study's aspirant headteachers for the intensity of the headship. They state that “the feeling of not really knowing the breadth and scope of the role was echoed by the respondents” and that “they did not realize the full extent of what the job entailed until after they had taken up the post on their own” (Daresh and Male, 2000, p. 96).

Likewise, Gronn (1999, pp. 179-180) argues that promotion to headship “marks an important personal developmental shift from being the young woman or man of promise to the person exercising formal responsibility. [...] this change will likely have entailed a prolonged internal self-appraisal of existing commitments, talents, values and priorities”. Therefore, to lead and have a vision to succeed, an aspiring headteacher needs to be aware of the demanding position of headship, so as to consider deeply if s/he is capable or/and willing to take the post.

The participants in this study call for a personalised professional development scheme within school premises covering all stages: preparation, induction and continuous professional development. This finding concurs with Huber’s (2008) argument that due to the increased complexity of the school leaders’ role “the emphasis has shifted from focusing on a specific role to a broader concept that concentrates on personal learning and one’s needs in terms of knowledge, dispositions, and performance that would be useful in a more complex environment” (Huber, 2008, p. 169).

### *Developing leadership qualities/characteristics*

Participants in this study stressed their need to develop key qualities/characteristics, which they consider as presuppositions for an aspirant to develop into a successful headteacher. Results revealed that these qualities/characteristics are developed and learned better through a blended-learning approach using both formal and informal

ways with the emphasis on the informal end of a continuum. What the results showed further was that those grouped as *professional identities* (see Table 5.2, p. 161), are developed better through emphasis on informal learning events. These qualities/characteristics address the development of the leader's personality and need to be developed within the school premises.

There is considerable literature to support the above outcomes stating the importance of developing such qualities for the success of headteachers. Particularly, Crawford (2012, p. 288) argues that "qualities, attributes and skills can be learned and developed over time". Thus, it can be argued that the development of these qualities/characteristics should start from the preparation phase, continue through the induction phase, carry on to the continuous professional development phase, and finally reach Huber's (2008) *reflective phase*. Therefore, it is obviously a life-time learning journey during the *formation* and *accession* stages (Gronn, 1999).

Moreover, in a research study conducted in 1998 in Cyprus, Pashiardis (2004b, p. 667) identified that "qualities (such as caring, sharing, crying, showing emotions and feelings) were evident in all 49 principals (both male and female) interviewed" and also that "it seems that one characteristic that these principals had in common was the exaggerated humane and emotional characteristics that they exhibited". The *humane* notion is also present in this research study. All headteachers stressed their efforts to develop a positive school



climate with emphasis on good relationships, being supportive to the staff, and caring about students. West-Burnham (2009, p. 68) refers to the humane approach in leadership arguing that “there is no difference between moral leadership in education and being a moral person – a course in ethics does not make people ethical”. There is definitely a need to develop qualities from early stages.

Giancola and Hutchison (2005, p. 14) claim that “the challenge for any leader [...] is to enhance the role of manager and elevate his or her thinking, wondering, and aspiring to a higher level”. They propose that headteachers should move between the Managerial Domain and the Humane Dimension, so as to move from management to leadership without neglecting the importance of both in a holistic approach of school leadership through personal and organisational transformation. They relate the following four components to their approach:

- (i) *Communication Based on Trust*: The leader emphasises horizontal networks between and among levels of power, share information, and create openness in communication.
- (ii) *Empowering Relationships*: The leader emphasises the importance of group deliberations, power shared with people, and self-awareness.
- (iii) *Other-Centred Purpose*: The leader shows compassion for people, believes in democratic leadership, and protects the well-being of people.

- (iv) *Personal and Organisational Transformation*: The leader emphasises personal development, promotes habits of the heart, and espouses school transformation over reform or restructuring.

(Giancola and Hutchison, 2005, pp. 14-15)

Furthermore, Törnsén (2010, pp. 94-95) in a study of secondary school principals in Sweden came into a “broad spectrum of qualities”; “factors that promote or inhibit success”. Her comprehensive list has some common qualities with this study’s key qualities/characteristics. Namely, the qualities ‘being democratic’, ‘being communicative’, ‘taking risks’, ‘being a listener’ and ‘enjoying working with people and respecting them’ match with this study’s list. She also stresses that: “how a principal is as a person affects his or her possibility to succeed and a successful principal is described as being confident and self-aware as a person and as a professional” (Törnsén, 2010, p. 95). Importantly, Pashiardis et al. (2012, p. 492) in a study in the secondary education in Cyprus argue that future research in Cyprus needs to focus on “the personal and professional values espoused by principals in their schools which influence their leadership practices”.

## **A holistic model of professional development for school leaders**

*In what ways could informal learning be incorporated into a holistic model of school leaders' professional development programme?*

The findings of this research study, are in agreement with other research findings in Cyprus (Pashiardis, 2004b; Pashiardis et al., 2011; Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011a; 2011b; Michaelidou and Pashiardis, 2009; Gronn and Ribbins, 2003), giving rise once again to the participants' disappointment for the conservatism, the centralisation and the stagnation in almost all educational matters in Cyprus. Participants were also strongly critical regarding the absence of a coherent leadership development framework within the Cyprus Educational System. Moreover, there is an appreciation that the existing training is not what is needed for the holistic professional development of the school leaders, since it provides training only during induction and without any other strategic planning involved.

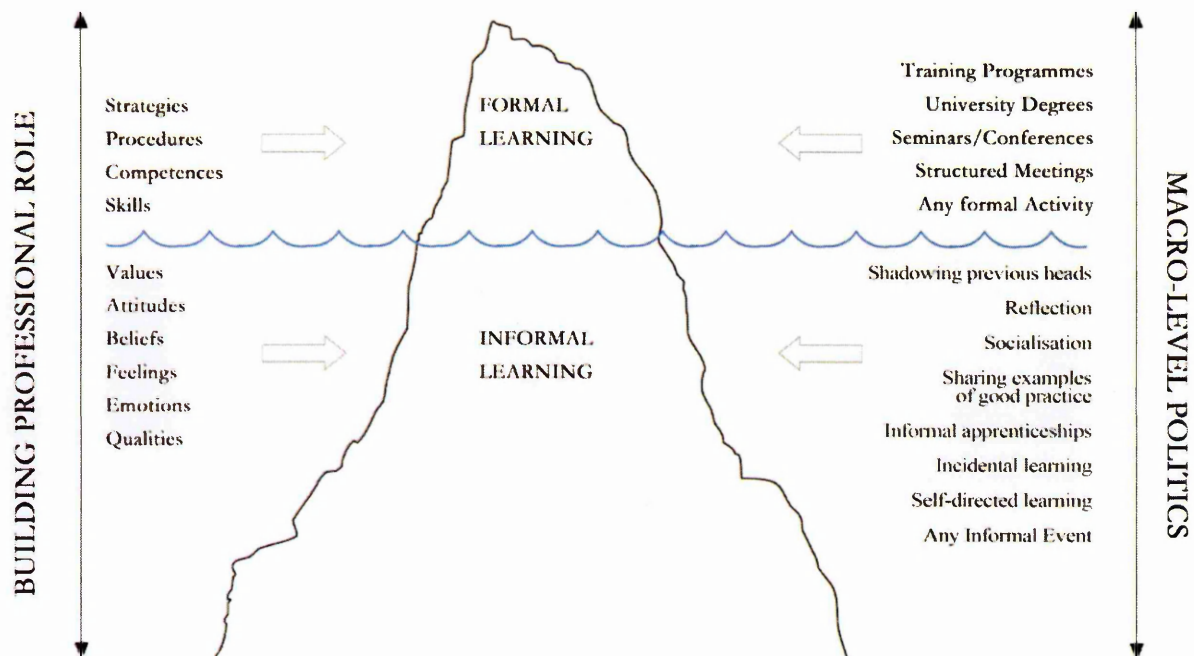
*'Macro-level politics'* were found to have a great impact on the professional development of headteachers and consequently on their learning to lead efforts. These macro-level politics are related to the centralised and conservative educational system, which has existed for decades. Despite the on-going dialogue for initiatives and changes, there is no evidence that the leadership policies will change significantly in the near future. Therefore, in proposing a new way of

doing things in terms of school leaders' and leadership development in Cyprus (and everywhere else) it is important to be aware of the existing cultural and contextual factors (Gronn, 1999; Busher, 2006). The participants' views focus on the need to build a new leadership development framework, emphasising in school-based learning processes, school autonomy and the creation of a community of headteachers.

What the participants revealed through their responses in the interviews and the questionnaire was their preference for informal ways of learning. They also expressed their strong belief that informal learning is the knowledge body which helps them overcome complexity and lead successfully. Therefore, they argued that focusing only in formal activities will cover only one part of the whole, suggesting that the informal part is significant for their success. As referred to in Chapter Two, the importance and significance of informal learning is illustrated in Coffield's (2000) *iceberg metaphor*: the submerged two thirds of the iceberg cover informal learning whereas the remaining one third above the surface of the water is sufficient to cover formal learning. This concept makes explicit the notion that learning is not just formal, and that formal and informal learning are complementary concepts of what makes a whole.

*The Iceberg Metaphor* (Coffield, 2000) presented in Figure 6.1 provides the conceptual framework revealed in this study regarding the development of the school leaders in the Cyprus Educational

System. In the part above the surface formal learning is presented. Formal learning occurs through participation in formal learning activities in training programmes, studying for university degrees, in seminars and conferences in which the main delivery format used is lectures, in structured meetings where there is a fixed agenda and certain tasks to be accomplished, and in any other formal activity. Participants in formal activities learn strategies, procedures, competences and skills: the *technical skills* (Scribner and Crow, 2012).



**Figure 6.1: Conceptual Framework**  
The Iceberg Metaphor: Formal and Informal Learning  
*Note.* The concept is adopted from Coffield (2000)

Then, informal learning occurs by shadowing previous headteachers, through reflection in-action and on-action, through organisational socialisation, by the sharing of good practice between novice and

experienced headteachers, participating in informal apprenticeships, from incidental learning events and from self-directed learning. Practitioners through informal arrangements conceptualise, understand and make their values, attitudes and beliefs solid, negotiate feelings and emotions, and develop their qualities: the *professional identities* (Scribner and Crow, 2012). On the left side of the framework the “Building Professional Role” heading illustrates that through the development of *professional identities* and the learning of *technical skills* the school leaders conceptualise the headteacher’s role and create the necessary ground to build a successful headship. On the right side of the framework the “Macro-level Politics” heading demonstrates the system’s policies impact on the different formats of learning, both formal and informal.

What is evident in the framework is the importance of informal learning for the holistic professional development of the school leaders. With informal learning events individuals develop their moral self in terms of values, attitudes, beliefs, feelings and emotions, while it is obvious that no formal activity would be able to grow such qualities. West-Burnham (2009, p. 68) emphatically asserts that “moral leadership cannot be taught, it is part of a process of personal development – an ‘intellectual and spiritual’ struggle – which moves towards personal authenticity, intuitive understanding and so to action based on a sophisticated model of personal meaning”.

School leaders need to build their professional identity (Gronn, 1999; Busher, 2006) which will guide their decisions and actions. Formal activities will provide the way of developing strategies, procedures and competences, which are very important for the development of a professional, and informal events will develop the leader's personality.

Through the qualitative data analysis the importance of informal learning was evident. Through the quantitative data analysis two results were enlightened. First, a confirmation of the significance of informal learning for the development of the headteacher, and secondly, the importance of formal learning, which despite the fact that it received a lower preference in the five-level Likert scale than informal learning, this was not in any case near "1 – not at all". On the contrary, the overall mean for formal learning was 3.3 whereas for informal learning was 4.3 (see Table 5.4, p. 182), revealing a difference of one level in the Likert scale between the two notions. What the above suggests is that both forms of learning were considered significant by participants for their holistic professional development. Consequently, a blended-learning approach is more appropriate for addressing the challenging area of headteachers' professional development in Cyprus.

In a blended-learning environment qualities/characteristics are developed using both formal activities and informal events. An outcome of this study is that qualities/characteristics are developed better with mutual contribution of both forms of learning. The above

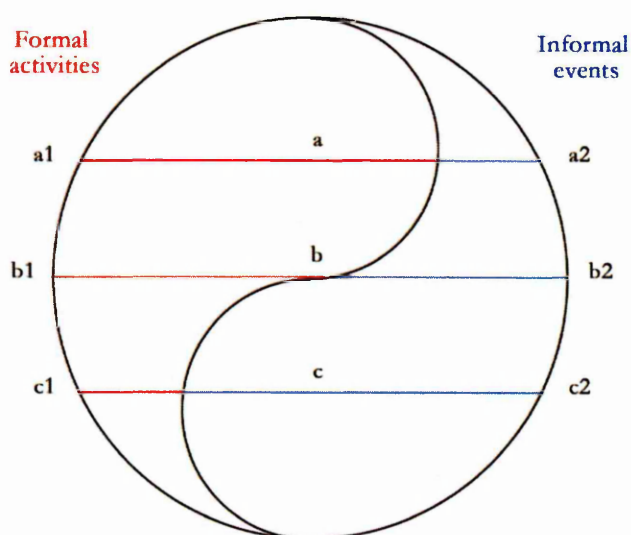
argument is illustrated in *The Formality-Informality Model* (see Figure 6.2).

The model draws on the *Yin-Yang* concept from the Chinese philosophy, which suggests that apparently opposite or contrary forces are actually complementary, interconnected and interdependent in the natural world (Fang, 2011; Li, 2008). As Fang (2011, p. 34) argues, the Yin Yang principle suggests the following philosophical underpinnings: (i) that “Yin and Yang coexist in everything, and everything embraces Yin and Yang”, (ii) that “Yin and Yang give rise to, complement, and reinforce each other”, and (iii) that “Yin and Yang exist within each other and interplay with each other to form a dynamic and paradoxical unity”. Therefore, both elements give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another and they interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than the assembled parts, as in the case of formal and informal learning.

The *Yin-Yang duality* referred to by Li (2008) implies a “worldview [which] is holistic, dynamic and dialectical” (Li, 2008, p. 416). The concept of *duality* is also found in Wenger’s (1998) learning theory of Communities of Practice. In agreement with Li (2008), Wenger (1998, p. 66) states that “a duality is a single conceptual unit that is formed by two inseparable and mutually constitutive elements whose inherent tension and complementarity give the concept richness and dynamism”.



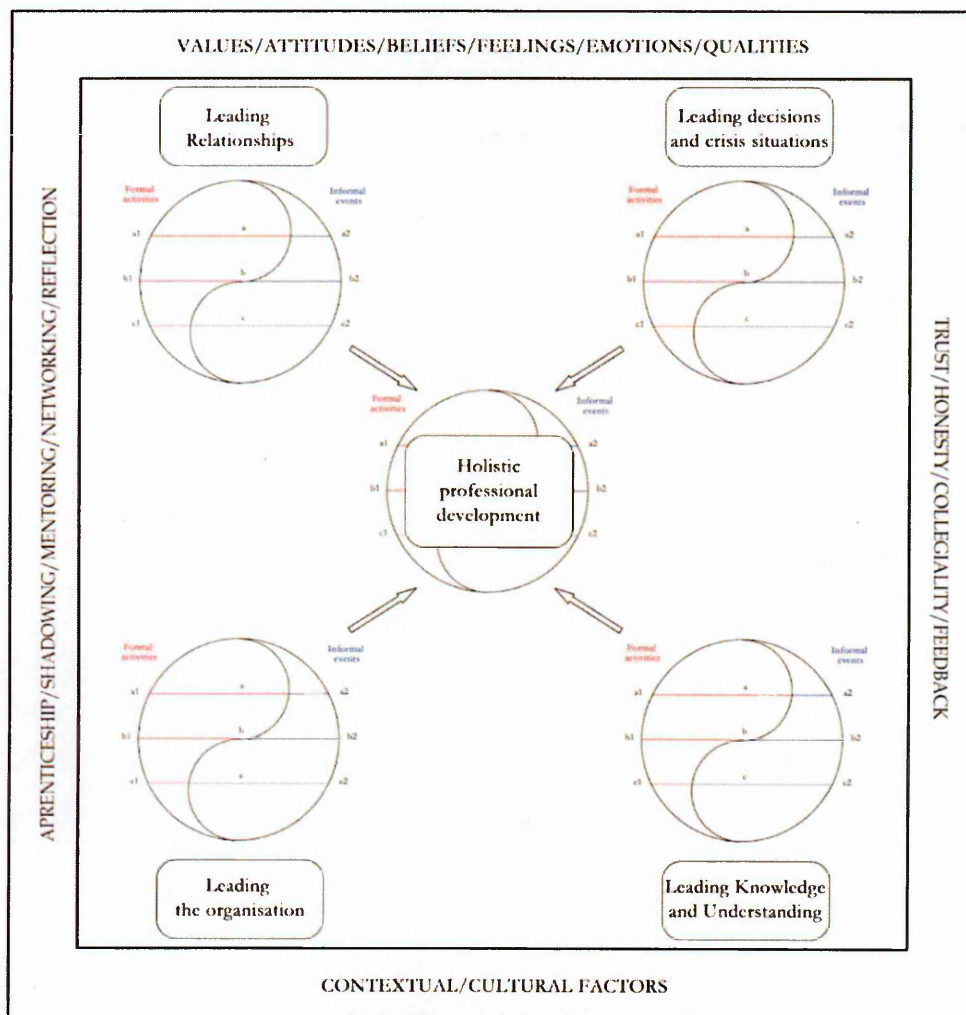
The *Formality- Informality Model*, presented in Figure 6.2, is separated into two parts; one part represents ‘Formal activities’ whereas the other represents ‘Informal events’. Lines ‘a’, ‘b’ and ‘c’ were drawn on purpose; one can draw numerous lines in this schema. These lines represent the qualities/characteristics which a school leader should develop to achieve success. Positions ‘a1’, ‘b1’, ‘c1’ represent the *formal end* whereas positions ‘a2’, ‘b2’, ‘c2’ represent the *informal end* of a continuum (Eraut, 2004).



**Figure 6.2:** The Formality-Informality Model

Therefore, quality/characteristic ‘a’ could be developed better by adopting more formal activities and less informal events, quality/characteristic ‘c’ could be developed better by adopting more informal events and less formal activities and quality/characteristic ‘b’ could be developed better by adopting equally both formal activities and informal events. The *Formality-Informality Model* guide the construction of a blended-learning professional development

programme for headteachers taking into consideration formal and informal learning as cumulative figures. *The Blended-Learning Model for the Professional Development of School Leaders* is presented in Figure 6.3.



**Figure 6.3:** The Blended-Learning Model for the Professional Development of School Leaders

The model draws from the conceptualisation presented by *The Formality-Informality model*, focusing on the scales in Part B of the quantitative questionnaire regarding the key qualities/characteristics of successful headteachers. These scales are: *Leading Relationships*; *Leading Decisions and Crisis Situations*; *Leading the Organisation*;

and *Leading Knowledge and Understanding*. Consequently, each scale consists of particular qualities/characteristics to be developed, which should be developed in a blended way using both formal activities and informal events, but in different percentage, as it is analytically explained in *The Formality-Informality Model*.

The Blended-Learning Model for the Professional Development of School Leaders is an integrated model, because as it is grounded in research data it takes a dynamic perspective. Blending is done in a twofold way: (i) in terms of the degree of formality of each presented task, and (ii) in terms of the different formats used, for example mentoring and networking as presented in the model. This moves the model in another direction, as it reinforces the need to develop trust, honesty, collegiality and feedback in the training processes and interactions between headteachers so as to promote learning as suggested by participants. Findings revealed that some headteachers stepped back when they were asked to participate into group-activities or to be open to support novices. Therefore, it is important to address contextual and cultural factors building a community of practice (Wenger, 1998) in which the main scope should be to give these people access to participation and sharing through *legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Newcomers will gradually move from *partial* to *full participation* (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 37) through a developmental process of growing involvement. Then, they will become experienced reaching the “reflective phase” (Huber, 2008).

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Introduction**

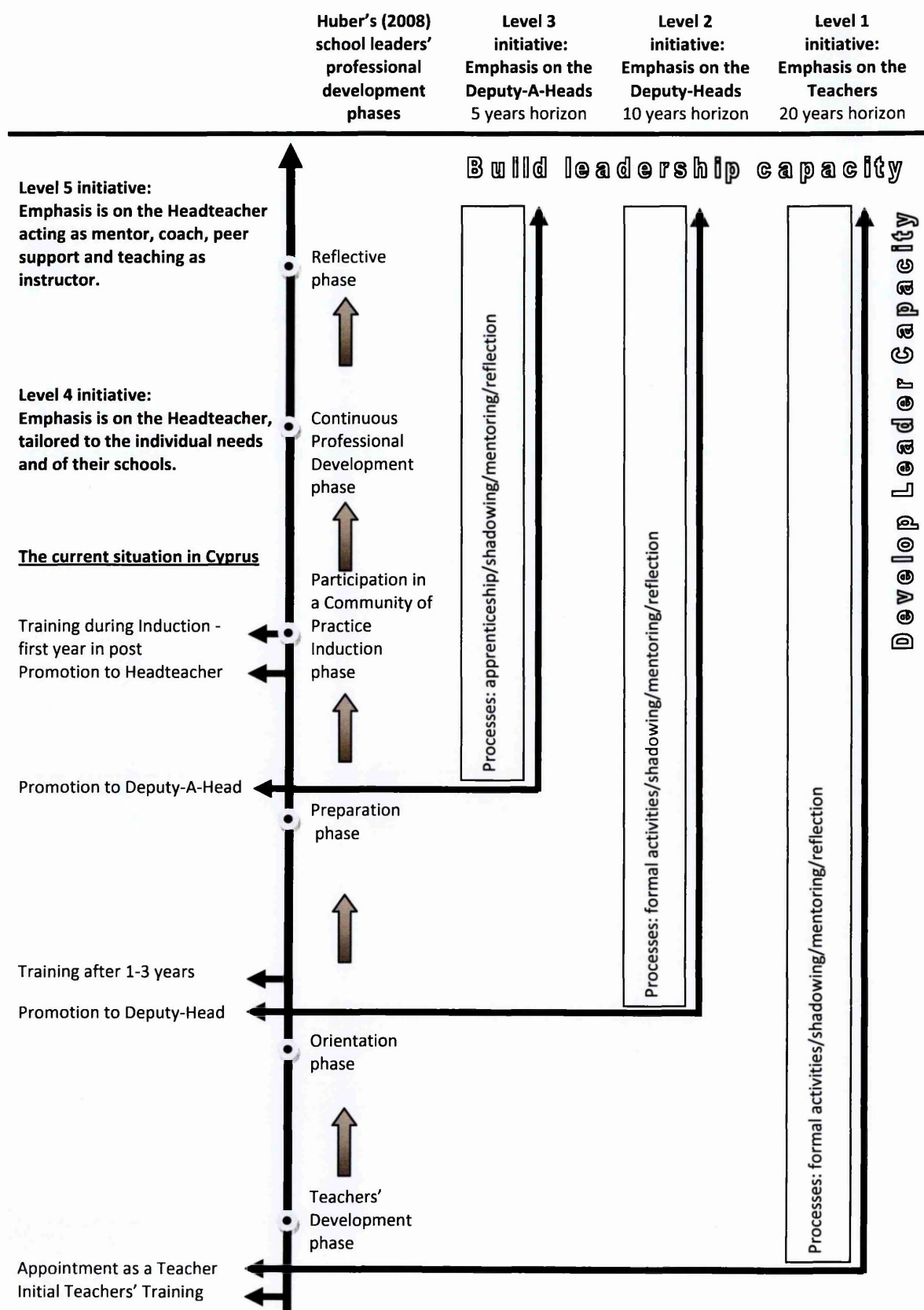
This final chapter aims to discuss the findings of this study in relation to the implications arising for secondary education school leaders' professional development in Cyprus and for policy makers in this field. *A New Leadership Professional Development Framework* for School Leaders in Cyprus is proposed and discussed in this section. Also, the contributions of the study to policy and practice in the educational field are presented next and possible implications for further research are also discussed. This chapter also includes a reflective section focusing on what the researcher has learnt throughout this study and what could be done differently if all were to start from the beginning.

### **Developing school leaders in Cyprus: Implications for policy**

Participants raised the need for a new framework for leaders' development, which is in line with other research evidence from Cyprus. In particular, Nicolaidou et al. (2013, p. 7) stress that "adhering both to national and international trends and demands, national authorities in Cyprus need to develop an overarching framework for conceptualising leadership development encapsulating the depth and complexity of thinking on leadership". Therefore, based on this study's findings a *New Leadership Professional*

*Development Framework for School Leaders* (see Figure 7.1) is proposed, which could be used to change the current situation in Cyprus. This framework is developed drawing on the concepts presented in Chapter Six. Particularly, this framework is based on and works in parallel with *The Iceberg Metaphor*, *The Formality-Informality Model*, and *The Blended-Learning Model for the Professional Development of School Leaders*. The proposed framework adopts Huber's (2008, p. 168) developmental phases: (i) teachers' continuous development, (ii) orientation, (iii) preparation, (iv) induction, (v) continuous professional development, and (vi) reflective.

Sophocleous (2013) identifies five paradoxes regarding the professional development of school leaders in Cyprus: (i) there is a teacher's preparatory programme provided before appointment, whereas there is no preparation provided before any other promotion; (ii) there is no written or any other form of assessment of the provided training in the induction phases either for deputy-heads or headteachers; (iii) deputy-heads' induction programme is not provided immediately after promotion but in a time period of 1-3 years; (iv) a professional development programme is provided during induction to the deputy-heads and the headteachers, but not to the deputy-alpha-heads who are left unprepared to meet the challenges of their new role after promotion into headteachers; and (v) there is no further professional development provided to the headteachers after the induction phase.



**Figure 7.1:** New Leadership Professional Development Framework for School Leaders in Cyprus

To address the above paradoxes the proposed framework considers *time frame* as the first parameter and the *three leadership posts* after promotion as the second parameter. Thus, it proposes five levels for leadership development: (i) *Level 1 initiative*, the emphasis is on the teachers with a time frame of twenty years, (ii) *Level 2 initiative*, the emphasis is on the deputy-heads with a time frame of ten years, (iii) *Level 3 initiative*, the emphasis is on the deputy-alpha-heads with a time frame of five years, (iv) *Level 4 initiative*, the emphasis is on the headteachers as a continuous professional development phase tailored to their needs and their schools' needs for school improvement, and (v) *Level 5 initiative*, the emphasis is on the headteachers' reflective phase (Huber, 2008) where they can act as mentors (or masters) in apprenticeship relationships, they can support fellow headteachers, both novice and experienced, and they can teach as instructors in the leadership professional development programmes. The number of years needed for moving from Level 4 to Level 5 depends on the individual's needs and aspirations, their remaining years of service and the needs of the educational system. Not everyone will succeed moving from Level 4 to Level 5 in their career, since they retire from active service at the age of sixty three.

The processes employed for the development of the individuals depend on the leadership post one is at and the individual's aspiration for stepping up the leadership ladder. Then, formal activities in training programmes, shadowing, mentoring, and reflection are the learning formats which should be used in the first two levels. The

difference between the developmental strategies employed in each leadership level should be the degree of formality of the offered activities and events. This study's findings proposed that individuals in the beginning of their career need more theoretical background and formal activities, so as to build their leadership personality on solid ground. Therefore, the emphasis should be on the *formal end* of the formality-informality continuum. Then, in the upper leadership levels, namely the deputy-alpha-heads' and the headteachers' levels, more informal events are proposed. Brauckmann and Pashiardis (2012, p. 23) claim that "beginning school leaders need training on technical issues", for which the answer might be more formal activities, while "experienced school leaders seem to need more training on instructional and strategic leadership skills", for which the answer might be more informal events. What this study's findings propose is that a blended-learning approach strategy with both formal activities and informal events in order to address individual needs in each phase of leadership development is appropriate.

This study's findings suggest that an apprenticeship relationship is essential in the case of the deputy-alpha-heads both prior promotion and after promotion before headship. Prior promotion the deputy-alpha-heads could have an apprenticeship relationship with their headteacher. Participants suggested that newly promoted headteachers should be able to follow up their new school right after the promotion, thus linking them in an apprenticeship relationship with the retired or transferred headteacher for the remaining period of



the school year (one to two months). This was the case with Aristodemos and Apollonia who had a two-month informal apprenticeship with fruitful results. The overall scope of the framework presented in Figure 7.1 is to develop leader capacity and build leadership capacity for improvement and sustainability.

Therefore, the critical issue for the Cyprus Educational System is to develop the headteachers to reach Huber's (2008) reflective phase, the Level 5 initiative. These Level 5 headteachers will act as mentors throughout the system, providing their knowledge and understanding not only to the aspirant headteachers (Level 1 up to Level 3), but also to those headteachers in the induction phase and those experienced headteachers who continue their professional development to also reach the reflective phase, located in Level 4 initiative.

Hence, there is a need for the Cyprus Educational System to develop a critical mass of Level 5 headteachers in an attempt to reinforce change. Level 5 headteachers will act to develop not only the aspirant school leaders' capacity to lead, but also to build leadership throughout the school system. The ongoing process of development of aspirant school leaders through mentoring and apprenticeship will enhance their leadership identity development throughout the different roles they are taking during their professional career. The Level 5 headteachers have a complete view of how the educational system works and what the obligations, duties and requirements for the different leadership posts are; they are able to see the forest, not

just the tree; during their professional career they have been in all previous posts developing their leadership qualities/characteristics; they are the 'old-timers' who will facilitate the development of the 'new-comers' (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Moreover, cultivating an informal community of practice is essential to cover the need 'to create and sustain [leaders' and] leadership capacity within and between schools' and to develop 'Leaders [who will] help others to familiarise with the characteristics of leadership, so that new leaders are born' (Nicolaidou and Petridou, 2011a, p. 77). Therefore, experienced and novice school leaders' collaboration and interaction should be enhanced; the focus should be placed on activities such as requesting information, sharing problems and solutions, discussing new developments, asking for opinion and advice, presenting new knowledge, identifying gaps in practice, and discussing about values and moral dilemmas. Through these informal events the novice school leaders will negotiate their own beliefs, values, emotions and understand the headteacher's demanding role. By learning as increasing participation these school leaders will gradually become full participants in the community of leaders, reaching Huber's reflective phase, and help to sustain the community of leaders for the future. The cultivation of a community of leaders does not restrict the emergent (Busher et al., 2014) or naturally occurring (Mittendorff et al., 2006) informal communities of practice. These informal communities of leaders should be seen as

developmental processes, which should be considered as a blessing for the professional development of school leaders.

There should be some pre-conditions from the policy-makers site in order for the proposed *New Leadership Professional Development Framework for School Leaders in Cyprus* to get successfully into implementation. First, policy-makers should realise: (i) the importance of successful leadership for change and school improvement, (ii) the importance of a leaders' selection process which will ensure that the best are to be selected from those aspirant school leaders, (iii) the importance of the preparation phase for leaders' development prior promotion, (iv) the importance of continuous professional development so as to develop the 'reflective' leader (Huber, 2008), and (v) the importance of building a leadership culture throughout the educational system, which will emphasise collegiality, trust and support. Second, policy-makers should realise that there is a need for the establishment of a Leadership Academy, which will put into practice the holistic professional development programme for school leaders. Third, policy-makers should realise that "leadership preparation should be an initiation into identity construction and subsequent performance, rather than solely aimed at the acquisition of managerial and technical knowledge and skills, and a generalized set of values to be applied in educational bureaucracies to enable the latter to become more efficient" (Lumby and English, 2013, p. 197).

## Contributions of the research

This study anticipates to have made several contributions to the body of knowledge on informal learning as an approach for the holistic professional development of school leaders in Cyprus. In particular, the contributions of this research study are outlined as follows:

1. The study provides an important starting point in exploring the notion of informal learning as a complementary element of formal learning strategies for the holistic professional development of school leaders. Moreover, this research identifies the ways in which informal learning is presented in the Cyprus Educational System, and the ways informal learning contributes to school leaders' learning to lead.
2. The study offers a useful insight into the *degree of formality* (formality-informality continuum), which should guide policy makers in the selection of formality for activities and/or events for specific tasks in professional development programmes: for example, a structured mentoring approach with the power in the hands of the mentors is moving on the formal end of the continuum of formality; instead, if the approach is more flexible and the decisions are in the hands of the mentee, then the approach tends to be on the informal end of the continuum.

3. The study reveals participants' views that employing a blended-learning approach using multiple forms of informal learning events and formal learning activities would have better results in achieving learning tasks. Moreover, that a blended-learning approach in selecting various learning formats, for example networking and mentoring, to support the school leaders would lead to a personalised approach having more possibility to develop successful school leaders.

4. The study identifies twenty-one key qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders in Cyprus, which consist of *professional identities* and *technical skills*. These qualities/characteristics are important since they could be used to provide to the designing of a professional development programme for school leaders.

5. The study presents *The Iceberg Metaphor* which can act as a conceptual foundation for the development of school leaders in Cyprus. It provides the distinction between formal and informal learning in the forms and the outcomes, stating the importance of building the professional identity of the headteacher and the impact which macro-level politics have on the development of school leaders.

6. The study proposes *The Blended-Learning Model for the Professional Development of School Leaders* which takes into account the formality-informality concept and the qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders in Cyprus, so as to present a model which could be used to build a professional development programme for

school leaders. This model could be used in all levels of professional development: preparation, induction, continuous professional development. The degree of formality and the chosen learning formats would be different in different phases to address participants' needs and readiness level.

7. The study presents a proposal for a *New Leadership Professional Development Framework for School Leaders in Cyprus* based on Huber's (2008) developmental phases. This framework addresses the need for a holistic leadership policy for the development of school leaders in the Cyprus Educational System, which currently is not the case.

Policy-makers and government agents in Cyprus and elsewhere can benefit from the findings of this study by carefully examining the advantages of informal learning events for school leaders' professional development.

## **Implications for further research**

This section outlines a number of areas worthy of further investigation. Firstly, data reveal that there is need to incorporate mentoring as a developmental strategy on a more structured form. Therefore, further research needs to be utilised in order to understand better the power relation between the mentor and the mentees and the processes they engaged in, in order to elaborate

on the formality-informality aspect trying to distinguish which *end* on the continuum could lead to better outcomes. Furthermore, the investigation could move into the school leaders' reflection processes and the effect the mentoring activities have in attitude change.

Moreover, additional research would be beneficial in terms of the qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders. Further research needs to support the efforts in developing leadership competencies which will support the development of structures and measure all aims and objectives for each module of the programme. Competencies and skills developed can support policy makers in devising the profile of school leaders in Cyprus and therefore support the selection processes as well.

## **Lessons learnt**

There are surely things to think about when you come to the end of a journey like this. What could I have avoided? What could I have done better? What would I like to change if I undertook the same research study again? Reflecting, I recognise that the move into the mixed methods was one of the most crucial decisions I had made during this study for two reasons. First, because the addition of the quantitative Phase Three after the qualitative Phases One and Two meant that much more time was needed since the data collection was doubled. Furthermore, the addition of the confirmatory qualitative Phase Four added time issues also.

Of course, the importance of employing mixed methods was high since it provided the opportunity to check tentative findings from previous phases. Secondly, because quantitative results added value to the findings of this study, which means that the decision was the right one. Without doubt using mixed methods gives a different perspective into a research study, but a suggestion for other researchers is that they should decide this from the very beginning of their project, which will allow them to schedule the research project in a functional way. In this study the decision was taken in the middle of the project, which added uncertainty and stress.

As far as the interviews are concerned I should have avoided taking the interviews during working time in the school leaders' offices, in which there is no privacy at all. Cycle C's interviews were implemented in a place outside schools, which was a splendid experience for the researcher and the interviewees.

As far as the questionnaire of the survey is concerned I should have avoided sending this to the deputy-alpha-heads, because the focus from the start was on the school leaders and the way *they* learn how to lead. This wrong decision added working hours without any significant reason. Moreover, two themes of the part A of the questionnaire had low coefficient alpha, which gives the message that more time and work was needed to develop a better questionnaire. If time was allocated in a more productive manner from the beginning of the study, then things could have been better.



## Final reflection

When you set out for Ithaka  
wish that your way will be long,  
full of adventures, full of knowledge. [...]  
Have Ithakas always in your mind.  
Your arrival there is what you are destined for.  
(ITHAKA, by Constantine Cavafy)

This journey was long, full of adventures and full of knowledge... This journey began twenty-one years ago, when a young teacher with a lot of insecurities and lack of experience was appointed in a small village school with twenty students as a teacher... and as a headteacher! The journey started with enthusiasm. *Ithaka* was the destination. Every arrival created a new challenge. Every discovery created a new destination, a new Ithaka. Now, I know what *Ithakas* mean.

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# **APPENDIX A**

## **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

### **STATEMENT**

I would like to thank you for accepting the invitation to participate in this interview which is conducted as part of the doctorate research project: 'Contribution of informal learning to the professional development of school leaders in Cyprus'. Your valuable experience as an educational leader can contribute to the investigation of the subject.

This research intends to investigate the following questions:

- In what ways do school leaders learn how to lead?
- In what ways can informal learning contribute to the professional development of school leaders?
- In what ways could informal learning be incorporated in a holistic model of school leaders' professional development programme?

Everything stated in this interview will only be used for the completion of this doctoral dissertation and will remain CONFIDENTIAL and inaccessible to others. The interview will be recorded using a digital audio device. A PSEUDONYM will be used in order to protect the personal information of the interviewees. No real names will be used on data stored. A summary of the interview data will be sent to your email address should you wish so, in order for you to add to or change your statements. You have the right to withdraw your statements from the research at any time you wish so by contacting me on my phone 99779937 or email afoplistis@gmail.com.

Regards,

Andros Sophocleous  
Doctoral Student  
The Open University

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*For completion by participant:*

I have read and understood the information in this form. I voluntary participate in this interview and all my questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher. Also, I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW SCEDULES**

#### **Interview Schedule – Phase One: Cycle A**

##### **A. Personal information**

1. I will ask him/her to present himself/herself (years of experience as a teacher, as a deputy headteacher, as a deputy-alpha headteacher, qualifications, training etc.) – [or we will provide an easy to fill information sheet with all the requested questions]
2. A follower might say - who is this person standing here before my eyes? And what kind of person is she or he? What would you reply? (in Gronn, P. (1999). *The making of Educational Leaders*. London: Cassell, p. 66)
3. Why did I become an educator in the first place? What do I stand for as a leader? What legacy do I want to leave? (Livsey and Palmer, 1999, cited in Fullan, 2003)

##### **B. Leading first time**

4. Which is the greatest challenge of all you had faced up to now in your career?
5. Which particular barriers – personal, organizational and social – have had to be surmounted in order to attain leadership status? (Gronn, P. (1999). *The making of Educational Leaders*. London: Cassell, pp.viii)
6. What kinds of opportunities have opened up along the way for leaders to exploit and to display their particular brand of leadership? Gronn, P. (1999). *The making of Educational Leaders*. London: Cassell, pp.viii

##### **C. Leader and Leadership Development**

7. Do standards frameworks enlighten us about leadership or have we justification to be sceptical about them? How clear are the assumptions about leadership on which standards frameworks are constructed? (MacBeath, J. and Dempster, N. (Ed.) (2009). *Connecting Leadership and Learning: Principles for Practice*, Oxon: Routledge, p.20 )
8. How well-equipped are leaders in this new dispensation to learn and to lead the learning of others? Gronn, P. (1999). *The making of Educational Leaders*. London: Cassell, pp.viii
9. Which is the best way for a headteacher to learn how to lead? Is learning a personal strike?
10. What is the importance of the experience new leaders have gained from their former headteachers for their Leadership practice? Do they have any stories to tell from the past?

11. What is the effect from formal-structured professional development program (leadership programs) to your belief and your practice as a leader? What is the effect of the professional development programs that the Pedagogical Institute is offering?
12. Is their evidence for individual cognition, if we know that explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge are both socially constructed and socially mediated? What factors are likely to affect the mode of cognition employed by a particular practitioner in a particular context?
13. Is there a need to bring together novice and expert leaders? Will this be proactive?

**D. Informal Learning**

14. What is the importance of informal learning for the development of new school leaders?
15. Can informal learning contribute to the effectiveness of school leaders' practice?
16. How could informal learning contribute to a holistic professional development model for school leaders?
17. In what ways can informal learning be incorporated in formal training sessions?
18. How do you develop and sustain a greater number of system thinkers in action? (Fullan, M. (2005). Leadership and Sustainability: System Thinkers in Action. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, pp.ix-x)

**E. Development of an online Community of Practice - CoP**

19. Is there a need for an online platform which will have as scope to bring together novice and expert leaders?
20. How to develop an online community of practice which supports dissemination of knowledge and enhance development of professional practice of school leaders? Should we have anonymity between the members?
21. Which role should have: the experts, the novice, the facilitators, and the coordinator in this online platform?

## **Interview Schedule – Phase One: Cycle B**

### **A. Introduction**

1. Why did you become an educator in the first place? What are your key educational principles?
2. What made you decide to become a Headteacher? What is your vision?

### **B. Personality as a Leader**

3. How you will describe yourself: as an administrator, as a manager or as a leader? Why?
4. What is your greatest strength? What is your greatest weakness?
5. What are the main domains you give importance and priority in your daily routine?

### **C. Learning how to lead and leadership Development**

6. Is your satisfaction in your work high or low? Why?
7. What strategies would you employ to ensure that teachers are motivated and committed and able to fulfil the tasks required of them? What do you do with those that do not follow?
8. Do you keep a reflective diary? If yes, how this is helping you in your future decisions/planning?
9. What is the importance of the experience you gain daily from your practice for your future decisions? Do you have a story to tell?
10. What is the importance of the experience you have gained from your previous posts for your practise as a headteacher? Do you have a story to tell?
11. What knowledge and what skills do you need to have to be successful in your job?
12. What is the importance of the experience you have gained from your former headteachers for your practice? Do you have a story to tell?
13. Is there a need to bring together novice and expert leaders? Will this be proactive?
14. How learning to lead occurs? Is learning to lead a change in behaviour or understanding? Is it a process?

### **D. Formal and Informal Learning**

15. What is the contribution of your training/studies so far to the success of your practise?

If s/he participated in the formal training the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is offering:

16. What is your opinion about the success of this formal programme?
17. What new knowledge and skills that you have learned made a difference in your professional practice?

If not:

18. What do you expect to gain from this formal programme? Did you ask others who were trained before you for information?
19. Do you believe that these professional development programmes could make you an effective headteacher? If yes, how? If not, why?
20. Is formal and informal learning equally important? Give us your own definition of these terms.
21. Can informal learning contribute to the professional development of school leaders?
22. Do you believe that informal learning can be incorporated in formal training sessions? In what ways?

## **Interview Schedule – Phase Two: Cycle C**

### **Introduction**

1. How did you decide to become a teacher?
2. What made you decide to apply for promotion to headteacher?
3. In which domain do you feel more successful as a headteacher?
4. Do you feel you need professional development in any field?

### **Successful schools/successful school leaders**

5. What are your criteria for a successful school?
6. Which are the most important areas which a school leader should develop within the Cyprus Educational System in order to be more successful?
7. Which are the characteristics of a successful school leader within the Cyprus Educational System?
8. What are the difficulties faced by a school leader during the early years in post?
9. What is needed so as to become more successful?

### **Leadership qualities/characteristics**

10. The list of characteristics mentioned by the interviewees during cycles A and B is presented. The interviewee is asked to choose the ten most important and rank them by order of their importance starting from the most significant (number 1) to the least (number 10).

### **Professional Development Programme**

11. Is a school leader born or made?
12. How successful is the current Programme for the professional development of school leaders?
13. In what other ways could the professional development of school leaders work?

### **Lessons from the field**

#### **Six scenarios and the “think a-loud” process are presented**

14. Are these scenarios possible to happen in schools in the Cyprus Educational System?
15. Rank them in order of importance/significance from one to six from the most significant (number 1) to the least (number 6).
16. Choose one and comment including your possible actions to solve the issue.
17. What would you have done as a headteacher to deal with this situation successfully? Please try to “think a-loud”.
18. Which qualities/characteristics should a headteacher possess in order to deal successfully with the given scenario?
19. Could you please recall/share a past experience which you faced complexity. How did you handle it?

## **Interview Schedule – Phase Four: Cycle D**

1. The interviews and the survey responses revealed a negative view from participants towards the Cyprus Educational System, in terms of bureaucracy and centralisation, and towards the Professional Development Programme offered, which it seems to be inadequate and too theoretical. What is your opinion?
2. In what ways can the professional development of school leaders change for the better?
3. In what ways school leaders learn how to lead?
4. What is the effect from experience?
5. Is it possible to incorporate informal events in the Professional Development Programme so as to make it more successful? In what ways?
6. From the interviews twenty-one qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders were identified. These are the following:
  - take initiatives and risks
  - have communication skills
  - create change for improvement
  - be efficient with time management
  - have the courage to make difficult decisions
  - not getting anxious or nervous
  - listen to followers
  - manage public relations successfully
  - inspire respect
  - be fair with people
  - admit mistakes
  - be people-oriented
  - be enthusiastic
  - be organised
  - be committed
  - be able to develop a school improvement plan
  - be able to organise a school self-evaluation
  - be able to delegate responsibilities and duties efficiently
  - face challenging circumstances efficiently
  - face dilemma situations efficiently
  - be democratic

Which qualities/characteristics do you rank as more important for a successful school leader? Why?

7. These twenty-one qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders were used to build the Part B of the survey questionnaire. The results showed a preference in informal events as is showed in the following Table 5.4 (p. 182). May I have your comment on the results?

8. Analysis of variables revealed no statistically significant difference in terms of the gender and years in post. More specifically, it seems that the views of the participants regarding 'macro-level politics', 'leading relationships', 'leading decisions and crisis situations', 'leading the organisation' and 'leading knowledge and understanding' did not differ significantly between male and female school leaders in the Cyprus Educational System. Neither did views from novice and experienced headteachers revealed any significant difference. What is your opinion for the above?

**Table 5.4:** Difference between means of Informal versus Formal of Key Qualities/Characteristics of School leaders in Cyprus (p. 182)

St	Likert Scale					INF	F	INF-F
	1	2	3	4	5			
1						4.2	2.6	+1.6
2						4.2	3.4	+0.8
3						4.1	3.3	+0.8
4						4.2	3.7	+0.5
5						4.3	2.7	+1.6
6						4.3	2.8	+1.5
7						4.3	3.5	+0.8
8						4.2	3.5	+0.7
9						4.4	2.8	+1.6
10						4.5	2.9	+1.6
11						4.4	2.8	+1.6
12						4.2	3.6	+0.6
13						4.5	2.6	+1.9
14						4.2	3.8	+0.4
15						4.5	2.7	+1.8
16						4.2	4.0	+0.2
17						4.1	4.1	0.0
18						4.3	3.8	+0.5
19						4.5	3.2	+1.3
20						4.5	3.3	+1.2
21						4.2	3.6	+0.6
Overall mean						4.3	3.3	+1.0

Note. Black line = participants view regarding formal learning, Red line = participants view regarding informal learning, INF=Informal, F=Formal, St=Statements. The qualities/characteristics are ordered above as these are used in Part B of the questionnaire.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **SCENARIOS USED IN PHASE TWO – CYCLE C**

#### **Scenario A**

You have been informed that a teacher has been having difficulties in maintaining discipline within his/her classroom, which has as an effect the loss of instruction time. You have received complaints from pupils and parents. The deputy headteacher in charge and subject leader has already offered his/her support. However, the teacher refuses to acknowledge the problem, arguing that this is a very common situation in public schools.

#### **Scenario B**

The ministry of Education and Culture published the students' national examination results by educational district, school and subject. Unfortunately, your school, which has lost its former prestige, has produced bad results and is ranked in the middle of the ranking board and way below the preceding schools. The school's Parents Association has expressed their dissatisfaction in relation to the results. During an immediate board meeting they have asked for a meeting with you in order to discuss the matter and decide further actions.

#### **Scenario C**

A fight between two students in the school yard during break has left one of them seriously injured on the face with a bleeding nose and mouth. As you are approaching the scene, one of the teachers who had attempted to stop the fight with no success, informs you that the injured student has already contacted his father by phone informing him of the incident. His father sounded really angry and is on his way to the school.

#### **Scenario D**

A female teacher has informed you that a female student confided in her that a male teacher has been behaving inappropriately towards her, that he continuously asks her during breaks to have meetings to discuss her academic performance and has touched her on the hand and elbow a number of times. He has her mobile phone number and calls her almost every day during school or on afternoon hours. He has not however been offensive or vulgar but shows extreme interest in her. The pupil feels uncomfortable and wishes for this to end. She lacks however the self-confidence to ask him not to call her since she is afraid of his reaction. She has assured the female teacher that neither her parents nor her best friends know about the situation because she wishes to avoid making things worse.

**Scenario E**

You have recently been promoted to a headteacher. Your first appointment is in a new school which has a tradition for exceptional academic results. Students are often winners in competitions organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Your predecessor had been in the current post for eight years. He is acknowledged by parents and teachers as an exceptional school leader. There have been no major changes within the leadership team or the teaching staff. You face negativity from the very start. All decisions you have taken are discussed by the teachers in informal gatherings. In a meeting with the leadership team some of them expressed openly their dispute to the changes you propose.

**Scenario F**

You have been informed that some cigarette butts with suspicious content have been found in the students' toilets. Also, there are suspicions that a student is a drug user who might also be acting as a drug dealer in order to earn his dose.

## APPENDIX D

### SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

**PART A:**

**Please state the degree you agree with the following statements. Circle the number next to each statement which expresses your view.**

**1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree**

		strongly disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
1	The Cyprus Educational System offers many professional development opportunities to its headteachers.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Headteachers' professional development should be directly connected to the schools.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The training offered through the headteachers' professional development programme is of a high level.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The offered Professional Development Programme succeeds in developing successful headteachers.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The headteachers' absences once a week so as to participate in the professional development programme creates problems in their schools.	1	2	3	4	5
6	The instructors of the Professional Development Programme are fully qualified to teach.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Headteachers better develop their leadership personality through self-directed learning processes.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The Professional Development Programme for secondary education headteachers needs to change with emphasis in practical ways.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The training should be offered prior promotion.	1	2	3	4	5
10	The headteachers should have professional development for all years in the post.	1	2	3	4	5
11	The subjects offered in the training cover the participants' needs for a successful headship.	1	2	3	4	5
12	The instructors should have a firsthand experience of secondary education.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Socialising both within and out of the school environment is a dynamic process which can provide the headteachers with great knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Novice headteachers need support from experienced headteachers in their first years of headship.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Experience from the deputy head and the deputy-alpha-head position is	1	2	3	4	5



	important for the development into a successful headteacher.	
16	The professional development of headteachers should focus on school practice.	1 2 3 4 5
17	The professional development of headteachers through a mentoring relation with an experienced headteacher can have positive results.	1 2 3 4 5
18	I have confidence in knowledge and skills derived through my experience so as to run my school successfully.	1 2 3 4 5
19	During my first year as a headteacher I faced many difficulties.	1 2 3 4 5
20	Teachers and students trust and respect my efforts to run the school successfully.	1 2 3 4 5
21	Experienced headteachers acting as mentors can promote successfully the professional development of the new school leaders.	1 2 3 4 5
22	The Professional Development Programme offered was useless; on the contrary my school experience was what helped me in leading successfully my school.	1 2 3 4 5
23	The Professional Development Programme for secondary education headteachers aims in developing school leaders.	1 2 3 4 5
24	I had higher expectations from the Professional Development Programme.	1 2 3 4 5
25	The Professional Development Programme for secondary education headteachers offered me the skills to lead the teachers and students of my school to great achievements.	1 2 3 4 5
26	The Cyprus Educational System should offer a professional development programme to the deputy-alpha-heads so as to prepare them for headship.	1 2 3 4 5
27	The Cyprus Educational System should have a selection process so as to identify the future school leaders from the early stages of their career.	1 2 3 4 5
28	Promotions to Headteachers should be made before the end of the school year and the new school leaders should be appointed directly to their new school.	1 2 3 4 5
29	Headteachers develop their leadership skills better through experience in leadership positions, as deputy-heads and as deputy-alpha-heads.	1 2 3 4 5
30	The Professional Development Programme for secondary education headteachers prepared me efficiently so as to face successfully the problems during my first headship.	1 2 3 4 5
31	I accomplished to deal with the demanding first headship because of the support I had from an experienced headteacher.	1 2 3 4 5
32	The Cyprus Educational System should develop the processes for the professional development of new school leaders from their early years.	1 2 3 4 5

## **Part B:**

Before proceeding to the completion of this part, please read and consider the explanations provided below about Formal and Informal Learning.

**What is formal learning?** It is learning which has the following characteristics: it is obligatory, it aims at specific results, it is offered by an educational institution, it has a specific curriculum and evaluation, it is organised and it is conducted by an instructor, leading to a certificate or diploma.

**What is informal learning?** It is learning which does not involve any of the above characteristics of formal learning. It is rather everything which pursues the development of understanding, knowledge and skill which can occur without the application of external factors. It has no set objective in terms of learning outcomes. It can be accumulated in the following ways: self-directed learning through relevant books or web pages, learning through the experience on headship, learning through an apprenticeship or through a mentoring relationship with an experienced headteacher etc.

**Complete in both scales the degree of development of each statement either through Formal Activities or Informal Events.**

**1=not at all, 2=to some extent, 3=somewhat, 4=to great extent, 5=absolutely**

Developed through Formal Activities	Statements	Developed through Informal Events
not at all to some extent somewhat to great extent absolutely		not at all to some extent somewhat to great extent absolutely
1 2 3 4 5	1. The ability to take up initiative and risk in order to lead school improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	2. The ability to communicate successfully in order to handle the multi-levelled relationships with ministry officials, inspectors, teaching staff, parents, pupils and other staff members.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	3. The ability to create school change so as to promote school improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	4. The ability to use time efficiently, so as to lead successfully.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	5. The courage to make difficult decisions, even when those would leave some of the people involved displeased.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	6. The ability to react calmly and wisely to any problem which shall occur at the school.	1 2 3 4 5



1 2 3 4 5	7. The ability to be a good listener and open to his/her subordinates, pupils, parents etc.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	8. The ability to manage public relations for the school benefit.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	9. The ability to inspire respect in order to achieve the support of his/her vision.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	10. The ability to be fair to people whether they are teachers, parents or pupils.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	11. Admitting mistakes/wrong decisions in order to set an example for the formation of culture and ethos within the school.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	12. The ability to be people oriented in order to be able to maximise the benefits achieving school's goals.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	13. The ability to be enthusiastic and to be able to share his/her vision for school success.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	14. The ability to be organised in order to be able to handle successfully the multi-levelled - multi-topic situations taking place at school.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	15. The ability to be committed so as to promote learning for students, teachers and him/herself.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	16. The ability to develop an action plan for school improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	17. The ability to develop and implement a school self-evaluation plan in order to acknowledge the areas in need of improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	18. The ability to delegate duties efficiently in order to achieve success of school activities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	19. The ability to face challenging circumstances efficiently.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	20. The ability to face difficult cases where a moral dilemma lies efficiently.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	21. The ability to be democratic so as to ensure that everyone is equally subjected to the same regulations and equally enjoy the same rights.	1 2 3 4 5

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN  
COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

APPENDIX E  
ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

One interview transcript with analysis is presented below.  
All the interview transcripts with analysis are included in  
the CD at the end of Appendix E.

ISOCRATES: Novice headteacher  
Cycle A

He has 34 years of experience in secondary vocational education: 24 years as a teacher, 7 years as a Deputy-Head, 2 years as a Deputy-Alpha-Head and he is in his first year as a Headteacher. He has no extra qualifications. He participated in the professional training programme offered to the Deputy Heads and he is currently participating in the training for the Headteachers.

codes	transcript	Themes/other ideas
improvement	<p>A.2. DW_A0819-A0820- A0821</p> <p>Θέλω να νιώθει ο κάθε συνάδελφος ότι δίπλα του θα έχει έναν καθοδηγητή, έναν εμπυχωτή, έναν συνεργάτη, έναν φίλο.</p> <p>Σκοπός του διευθυντή είναι [να προσφέρει στον εκπαιδευτικό όλες τις δυνατότητες] [στο μέτρο του δυνατού] ώστε να εκπληρώσει το έργο του το εκπαιδευτικό και το παιδαγωγικό. Οτιδήποτε αναλαμβάνεται θα πρέπει να είναι [στα πλαίσια της εκπαιδευτικής νομοθεσίας και των νόμων] που διέπουν την ομαλή λειτουργία ενός σχολείου.</p> <p>Ως νέος διευθυντής στο χώρο αυτό η προσπάθειά ΜΟΥ είναι [να βελτιώσω την κατάσταση]... πάντοτε υπάρχει περιθώριο βελτίωσης, δεν μπορούμε να πούμε ότι φτάσαμε... αν πούμε ότι φτάσαμε τότε εφησυχάζουμε και υπεισέρχονται άλλα πράγματα, όπως ομαλής λειτουργίας του σχολείου...</p>	<p>not an instructional leader, supportive to his teachers to teach</p> <p>he talks about limitations</p> <p>the system is highly centralised</p> <p>refers to the rules and regulations that he is obliged to follow and see that everyone follows</p> <p>to improve the situation – he is not happy with the situation as it is – sets high tasks</p>

<p>results demands</p>	<p>A.2. DW_A0822</p> <p>Ήμουν απόφοιτος Τεχνικής Σχολής, από μικρός μου άρεσε, έβλεπα τους καθηγητές μου, σαν παράδειγμα, υπάρχουν ακόμη, εκτιμώ ακόμη, όραμα να γίνω εκπαιδευτικός.</p> <p>Ανέκαθεν μου άρεσε να εμπλέκομαι στα κοινά, να αναλαμβάνω πρωτοβουλίες, στην Εθνική Φρουρά ήμουν αξιωματικός, εκπαιδευτήκα, Εθνοφυλακή, [πάντα είχα ηγετικές θέσεις], στα πλαίσια αυτά ... να μεταφέρω γνώσεις και εμπειρίες δικές ΜΟΥ, να βοηθήσω κόσμο.</p> <p>Η κληρονομιά που θα ήθελα είναι να αφήσω καλά αποτελέσματα στα πλαίσια των [υποχρεώσεων και των απαιτήσεων της θέσης του διευθυντή], να αφήσω καλύτερο έργο, όσο αφορά το τρίπτυχο της συνεργασίας γονείς εκπαιδευτικοί, μαθητές, να προσθέσω και φορείς και λοιπό προσωπικό της Σχολής.</p>	<p>Πάντα = always Inner need to lead</p> <p>He wants high results as his legacy</p> <p>The heads' position is very demanding [Cooperation between parents, teachers, students] where does he place himself? As a teacher or as someone who stands between?</p>
<p>art and advantage</p>	<p>B.4. DW_A0823</p> <p>Η μεγαλύτερη πρόκληση είναι η προσφορά, όλος ο κόσμος είναι διαφορετικός, θα έπρεπε να είμαι σε θέση να μεταφέρω το μήνυμά ΜΟΥ της προσφοράς και της προσπάθειας που κατέβαλλα, για να πετύχω το σκοπό ΜΟΥ που δεν είναι άλλος από την πρόοδο των μαθητών ΜΟΥ, την πρόοδο των καθηγητών ΜΟΥ και της ομαλής λειτουργίας του σχολείου. Και γενικά ό,τι αναλάμβανα να διεκπεραιώσω. Δεν σκέφτηκα ποτέ κόπου μόχθου χρόνου στην προσπάθειά ΜΟΥ να φέρω τα καλύτερα αποτελέσματα, πάντα στο μέτρο του δυνατού, για το καλό της εκπαίδευσης, του τόπου.</p> <p>B.5. DW_A0824</p> <p>Δεν είναι όλα ρόδινα στην εκπαίδευση, είναι τέχνη και πλεονέκτημα για κάποιον να μπορεί να αντιμετωπίσει τέτοιες καταστάσεις, ο κόσμος είναι διαφορετικός, [οι ερμηνείες που δίνει</p>	<p>Be in a position to transfer 'his message' of 'his effort' Not with others?</p> <p>Always! Repeats limitations [2] High self-esteem, he is a Head serving his country</p> <p>leading is an art, an advantage, if someone can face challenging circumstances with</p>



discipline	<p>κάποιος ότι πρέπει να γίνει μπορεί να είναι διαφορετικές].</p> <p>Αν εγώ επιμένω στην πειθαρχία, ο άλλος μπορεί να πει δεν είναι τόσο σημαντικό αυτό, εγώ τηρώ κανονισμούς, είμαι <b>λάτρης και θιασώτης της πειθαρχίας και των κανονισμών</b> για την ομαλή λειτουργία του σχολείου, δεν είναι αυτοσκοπός, αλλά πιστεύω ότι η <b>πειθαρχία</b> συμβάλλει σε όλα και στην επίτευξη των στόχων και των αποτελεσμάτων, <b>δεν μ' αρέσει να επιλέγω τις εύκολες λύσεις</b>, να λένε ότι είμαι καλός, να ανέχομαι χαλάρωση, να ανέχομαι ό,τι θέλουν οι μαθητές, ό,τι θέλουν οι εκπαιδευτικοί, ό,τι θέλουν οι γονείς, υπάρχουν κανονισμοί που πιστεύω ότι <b>ένας εκπαιδευτικός ηγέτης</b> θα πρέπει να αντιμετωπίσει, <b>δεν μπορεί να είναι αρεστός σε όλους</b>.</p> <p>Π.χ. κάποιος γονείς οι οποίοι δεν κατανοούν τους κανονισμούς, έχουν και τα δικά τους προβλήματα, συγκρούονται μαζί μας για να είναι αρεστοί στα παιδιά τους, έχει και εκπαιδευτικούς, ο διευθυντής θα πρέπει να προσπαθήσει <b>να ενημερώσει, να συμβιβάσει...</b> [<b>δύσκολη η δουλειά του διευθυντή</b>] αφού υπάρχουν προβλήματα οικογενειακά, οικονομικά, υγείας, κουλτούρας είναι ένας συνεχής αγώνας, [<b>δεν μπορεί μόνος πρέπει να έχει και αξίους συνεργάτες</b>], είναι [<b>με το παράδειγμά του</b>] να κάνει όλους να <b>ανταποκρίνονται στις απαιτήσεις του ρόλου τους</b>.</p>	<p>effectiveness</p> <p>Interpretation of reality – no one understands things the same way as the other</p> <p>Interpretations differ</p> <p>Highly focused into discipline and regulations [2]</p> <p>Discipline as the force to achieve more</p> <p>He is not listening to anyone; he knows better what shall be done. High self-esteem</p> <p>Loneliness of the position</p>
Leading by example	<p>DW_A0825 Εδώ αναφέρεται στο Σύνδεσμο Αποφοίτων Τεχνικών Σχολών του οποίου είναι ιδρυτικό μέλος και γραμματέας.</p> <p>B.6. DW_A0826</p> <p>Καθημερινά. Στην προσπάθειά ΜΟΥ για βελτίωση του σχολείου, ασχολήθηκα με θέματα υλικοτεχνικής υποδομής, τα οποία εμποδίζουν και εμποδίζουν την ομαλή λειτουργία του σχολείου,</p>	<p>Leading is a hard work</p> <p>First time he mentions colleagues</p> <p>He asks from everyone to be committed and respond to the role leading by example</p>

	<p>κτηριακά, εποπτικά μέσα, λειτουργικότητα εξοπλισμού, επιμόρφωση προσωπικού, τακτικές συνεδρίες και συνεδρίες των Κλάδων, νουθεσίες προς συναδέλφους και μαθητές, ενημέρωση γονιών [σε συνεργασία πάντοτε με τη διευθυντική ομάδα], τους συντονιστές των Κλάδων και όλους τους άλλους θα μπορούσαν να βοηθήσουν.</p>	<p>Cooperation with the management team? From statements above he seems to control everything; asks no one!</p>
vision	<p>Οι στόχοι ΜΟΥ είναι να πετύχω να έχω ένα [σχολείο ανθρώπινο, δημοκρατικό, μέσα στο οποίο οι μαθητές και οι συνάδελφοι θα θέλουν να βρίσκονται]. Κάποτε ίσως να είμαι λίγο [έντονος και λίγο πιεστικός], αλλά αυτά επιβάλλουν οι συνθήκες της προσπάθειάς ΜΟΥ για [έγκαιρη υλοποίηση των στόχων ΜΟΥ], αυτό δυσκολεύει, ίσως να έπρεπε να πιάσω λίγα-λίγα τα θέματα.</p>	<p>Vision: a humanistic and democratic school in which students and colleagues would like to be! He is autocratic not democratic...</p>
Creative anxiety	<p>Ερώτηση: Έχετε άγχος υλοποίησης των στόχων; Δεν μπορώ να το πω άγχος, αγχώνεται κάποιος ο οποίος είναι ανίκανος και δεν είναι σε θέση να δημιουργήσει, εγώ λόγω της τελειομανίας ΜΟΥ, θέλω [να φέρω γρηγορότερα αποτελέσματα], ίσως να φαίνομαι αγχώδης, αλλά το θεωρώ δημιουργικό άγχος ...</p>	<p>To accomplish his tasks, his vision soon. He wants to prove he is better than others; maybe headteachers in the school before him? It seems that he is stressed but he calls this creative anxiety.</p>
Collective work	<p>Ερώτηση: δεν είναι πρωταρχικός στόχος τα αποτελέσματα των μαθητών μας; Οπωσδήποτε ο διευθυντής μπορεί να επενεργήσει, είναι Ο στόχος, η μείωση της σχολικής αποτυχίας, η αύξηση της σχολικής επιτυχίας, σημαίνει αυτόματα επιτυχία στο έργο ολόκληρης της σχολικής μονάδας, και του διευθυντή ο οποίος ηγείται, δεν είναι το άτομο, αν πετύχει το σχολείο δεν είναι έργο του διευθυντή, είναι συλλογικό έργο, με νουθεσίες προς τους μαθητές να διαβάζουν, να συνεργάζονται με τους καθηγητές τους, να</p>	<p>Recognizes that he needs others, for a school to succeed it is everyone's work</p>



<p>School climate</p> <p>cooperation</p>	<p>αποφεύγονται οι ζημιές, να δημιουργηθεί ένα <u>[ευχάριστο κλίμα]</u>, αυτό θα επενεργήσει θετικά, άρα σίγουρα ο ρόλος του διευθυντή είναι σημαντικός, <u>συνεργασία</u> με όλους και με τις συντεχνίες... συμμετοχή σε σεμινάρια, ...οι απουσίες του προσωπικού πρέπει να περιορίζονται.</p>	<p>a pleasant school climate will have positive outcomes</p>
	<p>B.7. DW_A0827</p> <p>Σε σεμινάριο χθες είπαμε ότι ο διευθυντής θα πρέπει να έχει όραμα και ο βασικός του στόχος πρέπει να είναι η επιτυχία των μαθητών του, είναι οι λέξεις κλειδιά. Όλες οι ενέργειες πρέπει να διέπονται από αυτό. Για να το πετύχει αυτό πρέπει να κάνει όλα τα άλλα: υλικοτεχνική υποδομή, επιμόρφωση προσωπικού, συνεργασία, ενθουσιασμός, πρωτοβουλίες.</p> <p>Ερώτηση: Αν γίνουν ακαδημίες ανάπτυξης ηγετών;</p> <p>Σίγουρα θα είναι υποβοηθητικό, αλλά πιστεύω ότι <u>ο διευθυντής πρέπει να έχει χάρισμα</u>, όσο και αν επιμορφωθεί και να πάρει πτυχία, να περάσει εξετάσεις, πιστεύω ότι πρέπει να τον διακατέχει και ένα χάρισμα, δηλ. <u>να αναλαμβάνει πρωτοβουλίες, να παίρνει ρίσκα, να έχει προσέγγιση</u>, να είναι ευχάριστος και αυστηρός, ανάλογα με την περίπτωση, <u>δεν υπάρχουν στάνταρτς</u>. Όλα εξαρτώνται από το άτομο, <u>πώς θα υλοποιήσει αυτά που έμαθε</u>.</p>	<p>He is under training thus training quotes dominate him now</p> <p>Complex role of the Head – he is in charge of everything Does he delegate responsibilities?</p> <p>Charismatic leadership</p>
<p>there are no standards</p> <p>Development of leadership skills</p>	<p>B.8. DW_A0828</p> <p>Πιστεύω πως μέσα από την πολύχρονη εμπειρία <u>ΜΟΥ</u> στην εκπαίδευση, από όλα τα πόστα, και με την εμπλοκή <u>ΜΟΥ</u> στα κοινά, <u>σε Συνδέσμους, μέσα από τις θέσεις ΜΟΥ στο στρατό ανέπτυξα ηγετικές ικανότητες</u>, με στόχο πάντα την</p>	<p>Leadership profile: Take initiatives, take risks, develop communication skills</p> <p><u>individual leader</u> 'to put in practice what he have learnt': what does he mean? From the training?</p> <p>In the army! He was an officer.</p>

experience	<p>επιτυχία. Δεν <b>ΜΟΥ</b> αρέσει να αποτυγχάνω.  Τεράστιες <b>εμπειρίες</b> που με βοηθούν αφάνταστα να ανταποκρίνομαι στις απαιτήσεις στις θέσεις του διευθυντή.</p> <p>C.13. DW_A0833  Θα μπορούσε στα σεμινάρια να υπάρχει <b>περισσότερος χρόνος για συζητήσεις</b>, το μεγαλύτερο πρόβλημα είναι ότι τα σεμινάρια διεξάγονται σε σχολικό χρόνο, η έγνοια του διευθυντή είναι στο σχολείο, θέλοντας και μη, δεν υπάρχουν αυτόματοι πιλότοι και ούτε ότι είναι αναντικατάστατος ο διευθυντής, αλλά πάει σε ένα σεμινάριο, υπάρχουν προβλήματα, εργασίες να γίνουν, <b>τα σεμινάρια θα πρέπει να γίνονται πριν την ανάληψη της θέσης</b>, όπως με το υλικό του κ. Γρηγορίου, ήταν όλα έτοιμα, από την πρώτη μέρα ανάληψης των καθηκόντων τι πρέπει να γίνει, τα έντυπα, φυσικά κανείς θα χρησιμοποιήσει κάτι τέτοιο στη βάση των ιδιαιτεροτήτων του σχολείου και της κουλτούρας του σχολείου, όμως είναι κάτι έτοιμο, υποβοηθητικό και μπορείς να δώσεις το χρόνο σου στην υλοποίηση, στην εφαρμογή.  Θα πρέπει να <b>συγκεντρωθεί το υλικό</b>, να γίνονται εργαστήρια πριν την ανάληψη <b>για αντιμετώπιση διάφορων καταστάσεων</b>. Τα σεμινάρια που θα γίνουν κατά τη διάρκεια του σχολικού έτους να είναι για <b>προβληματισμό, για αυτοκριτική</b>, για ενίσχυση του έργου.</p> <p>C.10. DW_A0829  Όταν ήμουν υφιστάμενος, αξιοποίησα τις γνώσεις, τις συμβουλές τους, άλλες υιοθέτησα, άλλες ενίσχυσα με τη δική <b>ΜΟΥ</b> την <b>προσωπικότητα</b>.</p> <p>Έχω κερδίσει από όλους τους διευθυντές που υπηρέτησα μαζί τους, ο καθένας είχε τη δική του προσέγγιση, προσπάθησα να πάρω από όλους, <b>έχω μία γκάμα εμπειριών που προήλθε από</b></p>	<p>Suggestion: training should involve more conversations between participants – is there a need to develop a Community of practice?  Training should not take the Headteacher away from his own school</p> <p>Seminars/training <b>must</b> be done prior post</p> <p>Suggestions about the training:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prior the post to deal with practicalities; daily practice; what to do on the first day of school?</li> <li>2. Training during induction should be for reflection</li> <li>3. Experienced headteachers could help providing their strategy</li> </ol> <p>a selection of experiences derived from other colleagues with leadership positions</p>
reflection		
personality		
Informal apprenticeships or		



informal shadowing	<p>άλλους συναδέλφους με ηγετικό ρόλο.</p> <p>Ο μακαρίτης Μιχαήλ Μιχαήλ ήταν ένας άνθρωπος ο οποίος πρόσφερε τα πάντα στην εκπαίδευση, ήταν πάντα κοντά στους καθηγητές του, κοντά στους μαθητές, αυστηρός, πλησιάζει στο στυλ το δικό ΜΟΥ της πειθαρχίας και της ανθρώπινης προσέγγισης.</p>	<p>His own leadership model is “discipline with a human approach”</p>
Sharing experiences	<p>C.11. DW_A0830</p> <p>Από τη μέχρι τώρα εμπειρία ΜΟΥ από τα σεμινάρια διευθυντών φαίνεται ότι κερδίζω θετικά, με τις συζητήσεις που αναπτύσσονται, με τα παραδείγματα, με τους εισηγητές, με τις εμπειρίες των άλλων διευθυντών, γίνεται ένας διάλογος, μία συζήτηση, αναλύονται τα προβλήματα της καθημερινότητας, ακόμη και μεταξύ ενός καφέ κι ενός γλυκού στα διαλείμματα, και κατά τη διάρκεια των σεμιναρίων, αυτά που ακούω με προβληματίζουν και με κάνουν να κάνω μία κριτική: εγώ τι κάνω στο σχολείο ΜΟΥ; Πώς το κάνω; Πώς θα το έκανα καλύτερα; Εισηγητές όπως ο κ. Γρηγορίου Σταύρος, που ήταν διευθυντής, και το υλικό που μας έδωσε, είναι πολύ υποβοηθητικά. Ίσως αν γίνονταν πριν την ανάληψη του σχολείου, είτε κάποια από αυτά, ίσως να βοηθούσαν περισσότερο, παρά τώρα κατά τη σχολική χρονιά.</p> <p>Μέσα από τις εισηγήσεις των ειδικών (έχουν κάνει έρευνες) μεταφέρονται κάποια μηνύματα σε μας και μέσα από τους σχολιασμούς και τις συζητήσεις, θεωρώ ότι όλα είναι υποβοηθητικά, και η θεωρία και οι εισηγήσεις και τα θέματα που αναλύονται τα καθημερινά ζητήματα, δίνεται χρόνος από τους εισηγητές και αναπτύσσονται τα θέματα και αυτό είναι πολύ υποβοηθητικό.</p> <p>C.13. DW_A0831, DW_A0832</p>	<p>With the experiences of the other Heads, we start a dialogue; we start a conversation; we analyse the problems we face; our routine is being analysed; even between a cookie and a coffee in the corridor. We do this during the seminars as well. These stories make me reflect: What is my impact on my school to change things? How do I proceed? How could I perform better?’ (c1nh)</p> <p>He recognises the important role of the researchers and their results. Maybe a system change and development could come from the bottom through research?</p> <p>He has no extra qualifications he finds both theory and practice as helpful for his development</p> <p>to bring together novice with experienced Heads</p>

<p>Practical help</p> <p>Informally</p> <p>Time management</p>	<p>Οπωσδήποτε θα πρέπει να έρχονται σε επαφή νέοι με έμπειρους διευθυντές, μέσα στα πλαίσια της επιμόρφωσης που συμμετέχω ένας εκ των εισηγητών είναι διευθυντής, ο οποίος διάγει το τελευταίο έτος της υπηρεσίας του, ο οποίος ήταν πολύ βοηθητικός, τεράστιο υλικό, ό,τι θέλει και όπως θέλει το χρησιμοποιεί κανείς, είναι μεγάλη βοήθεια, πρακτική βοήθεια, ήδη χρησιμοποιήσα και άλλοι συνάδελφοι αξιοποιήσαμε και είναι καλό να έρχονται καταξιωμένοι διευθυντές, οι οποίοι πέτυχαν στο έργο τους, να μεταφέρουν τις πολύτιμες τους εμπειρίες. Ο κ. Γρηγορίου είχε την καλή διάθεση να δώσει το υλικό, είναι καλό το ΥΠΠ να κρατεί Τράπεζα σημειώσεων - πληροφοριών. Είναι δουλειά του ΥΠΠ και του Παιδαγωγικού Ινστιτούτου αφού γνωρίζει τους επιτυχημένους διευθυντές, ...Τράπεζα σημειώσεων ακόμη και μέσα από το διαδίκτυο. Γίνεται και ανεπίσημα μέσω συζητήσεων, ασχολούμαστε με τα προβλήματα, αλλά υπάρχει το πρόβλημα του χρόνου, εκπροσωπήσεις του σχολείου, μεταφέρουμε δουλειά στο σπίτι.</p>	<p>should be a must</p> <p>Experience is valuable</p> <p>There is lack of time, you have to represent school after school hours, we take work at home</p>
<p>Collective learning</p>	<p>C.19. DW_A0834, DW_A0835</p> <p>Σίγουρα η τεχνολογία μπορεί να βοηθήσει, αλλά αυτό θα πρέπει να είναι μία επίσημη προσπάθεια να επικεντρωθεί να βρει τους διευθυντές και τους πρώην, να συγκεντρωθεί ένα υλικό ώστε μέσα από το διαδίκτυο να προσφερθεί σε όποιον το χρειάζεται. Ανταλλαγή απόψεων και συζητήσεων καλό ή κακό προβληματίζει.</p> <p>Θα θέλατε να έχετε ανωνυμία ή ονομαστικώς; Δεν έχω ιδιαίτερο λόγο να παραμείνω ανώνυμος.</p> <p>C.12. DW_A0836</p> <p>Ο καθένας θα πρέπει να μοιράζεται όλες τις πληροφορίες που θα μπορούσαν να υποστηρίξουν το έργο, η συλλογική μάθηση είναι υποβοηθητική, δεν γεννιέται κανείς διευθυντής, κουράγιο, υπομονή που πρέπει να διακατέχεται</p>	<p>Practical help through the internet</p> <p>Collective learning is very helpful , no one is born a leader</p> <p>He claimed before that</p>

	<p>κάθε εκπαιδευτικός, κανείς μαθαίνει με την εμπλοκή με τα καθήκοντα του, θα μάθει μέσα από τυχόν παραλείψεις και λάθη του.</p> <p>END</p>	<p>the one to lead has to have charisma; now he says that no one is born a leader claiming that leaders are developed through experience Learning comes through trial and error</p>
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## APPENDIX F: TRANSLATION EXAMPLES

### 1<sup>st</sup> EXAMPLE

#### Cycle B Demosthenes - GREEK

Αμα κάτσεις πίσω από το θρανίο συμπεριφέρεσαι ως μαθητής. Κύριε να μας αφήσετε πιο νωρίς να μην κάνουμε διάλειμμα. Να μας αφήσετε πιο γρήγορα. [...] Να γίνεται φασαρία, να μην μπορείς να παρακολουθήσεις.

#### Google translation (<https://translate.google.com>)

Upon sit behind the bench behave as a student. Lord let us earlier not to have a break. Leave us faster. [...] To be made a fuss, you cannot watch.

#### Edited translation

When you sit behind the desk you behave like a student. Can we finish the lesson earlier without a break? Can we leave earlier? [...] There is noise; you can't follow the instructors' lesson.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> EXAMPLE

#### Cycle D Philotheos - GREEK

το να αναλαμβάνεις την διεύθυνση του σχολείου και να πηγαίνεις ύστερα μια φορά την εβδομάδα για να διδάσκουν κάτι είναι οξύμωρο. [...] οι πρώτες 15 μέρες είναι οι πιο δύσκολες για την οργάνωση ενός σχολείου. Εάν δεν έχεις την εμπειρία πώς θα οργανώσεις το σχολείο σου;

#### Google translation (<https://translate.google.com>)

to assume school management and after going once a week to teach something is an oxymoron. [...] the first 15 days are the most difficult to organize a school. If you have no experience how to organise your school?

#### Edited translation

"It is oxymoron; you take over the headship of the school and training starts one week after. [...] The first fifteen days are the most difficult days for the school to get organised. If you do not have experience how are you going to make it?



## APPENDIX G

### 31 QUALITIES/CHARACTERISTICS REVEALED FROM PHASE ONE

Instructions to participants: These qualities/characteristics of successful school leaders were revealed from interviews during Phase One of this research study. On the left side select the ten more important for you and on the right side rank them from one (the most important) to ten (the least important). You can add to the list what you believe is missing. Please read the whole of the list before selection.

	<i>take initiatives and risks</i>	
	do not fear to take responsibilities	
	<i>have communication skills</i>	
	<i>create change for improvement</i>	
	<i>have the courage to make difficult decisions</i>	
	feel efficient	
	be strong enough because leading is very demanding and exhausting	
	<i>be efficient with time management</i>	
	<i>not getting anxious or nervous</i>	
	stress management	
	<i>listen to followers</i>	
	<i>manage public relations successfully</i>	
	successful staff management	
	give emphasis on emotions and satisfaction of the teachers	
	<i>inspire respect</i>	
	<i>face dilemma situations efficiently</i>	
	<i>be democratic</i>	
	<i>be fair with people</i>	
	have a good approach	
	<i>admit mistakes</i>	
	<i>be people-oriented</i>	
	be task-oriented	
	help teachers in their teaching practice	
	<i>be enthusiastic</i>	
	<i>be organised</i>	
	have patience	
	<i>be committed</i>	
	<i>face challenging circumstances effectively</i>	
	<i>be able to develop a school improvement plan</i>	
	<i>be able to organise a school self-evaluation</i>	
	<i>be able to delegate responsibilities and duties effectively</i>	

**Note:** Qualities/characteristics in red colour are those which were chosen by participants in Cycle C during Phase Two.

# **APPENDIX H** **PAIRED SAMPLES TEST**

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Leading Relationships – Formal Learning (FL)	3,3636	66	,79142	,09742
	Leading Relationships – Informal Learning (IL)	4,2636	66	,59242	,07292
Pair 2	Leading Decisions and Crisis Situations - FL	3,1576	66	,85324	,10503
	Leading Decisions and Crisis Situations - IL	4,3606	66	,51347	,06320
Pair 3	Leading the Organization - FL	3,5934	66	,72744	,08954
	Leading the Organization - IL	4,1692	66	,51763	,06372
Pair 4	Leading Knowledge and Understanding - FL	2,9273	66	,91795	,11299
	Leading Knowledge and Understanding - IL	4,4212	66	,53909	,06636

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Leading Relationships-FL								
	Leading Relationships-IL	-,90000	,84943	,10456	-1,10882	-,69118	-8,608	65	,000
Pair 2	Leading Decisions and Crisis Situations-FL								
	Leading Decisions and Crisis Situations-IL	-1,20303	1,04631	,12879	-1,46024	-,94582	-9,341	65	,000
Pair 3	Leading the Organization-L								
	Leading the Organization-IL	-,57576	,72335	,08904	-,75358	-,39794	-6,466	65	,000
Pair 4	Leading Knowledge and Understanding-FL								
	Leading Knowledge and Understanding-IL	-1,49394	1,11118	,13678	-1,76710	-,122078	-10,922	65	,000

# **APPENDIX I**

## **QUOTATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS REGARDING QUALITIES/CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL LEADERS IN CYPRUS**

### **FROM PHASE TWO – CYCLE C**

#### **Professional identities**

##### ***Take initiatives and risks***

“Being a school leader these days is similar to risk-taking. And if a head cannot take risk in all areas of interest, then s/he should not continue to be a head. Risk-taking is an everyday process. If you are waiting for the Ministry to take responsibility and tell you what to do, then you can’t move on into improvement and success. Taking risks I will succeed, having all responsibility.” (Herakleios)

“The head should take responsibilities; it’s just too important. If you are afraid to take risks, if you go always by the letter of the law or if you are afraid that others will create problems and act as barriers, then you will never succeed.” (Apollonia)

##### ***Inspire respect***

“You can earn their respect in your every day contact with them, students, teachers, parents, in all levels, even with the Ministry. You have to be ethical in your actions, you should respect them, your decisions affect them, some more, some less... your daily ethical actions will lead them to respect you, to appreciate and to love you. It’s like a mirror, and you have to try from your position to be fair, to act with justice, to be next to people in need. If you want them to respect you, then you should respect them first.” (Eutychia)

“Teachers work hard or not, whether they respect you, and how much they respect you. The art is to respect you not because you are the head, but because you are (his name). So, if they respect you they listen to you easier and they try hard to please you. This works with the students as well... and with parents and with ministry officials... with everyone. Students will behave well not with punishments, on the contrary they will behave well if they respect and love me.” (Herakleios)

“It is very important that they respect you, but you must earn this, you can’t just demand it... you must prove them that you are there for them, that you want to be there, that you want to serve them, that you want to back-up them.” (Apollonia)

“Respect comes as a physical reaction and is very significant for school success. When you infuse them respect the most important benefit is that you show the teachers the way, so as to have them act in the same way to inspire their students and earn their respect” (Aristodemos)

### ***Have the courage to make difficult decisions***

“You have to be careful not to assume that this case is the same with the other; actually, you have to face each case as a different one because different people are involved. So, for example, what I have faced yesterday, which was a robbery, today I have to see it differently because this student has stolen because he was starving.” (Herakleios)

“To postpone taking decision is bad for people, bad for the school and to paideia in general, because there is an impact to the social environment and in general tremor... because it is like an earthquake, which is going to affect up to a point; the tremor of your decision.” (Aristodemos)

“Difficult decisions are taken from just one person in schools: the head of the school. You should take a decision even if it is hard. You are the head, the Ministry should not take the decision, and the head should not find excuses and postpone. There are cases that you might hurt people, others with ethical dilemmas, others involving relationships between teachers and students, and every problem is a different problem, and you should deal with it appropriately, you should give the needed care [...] to take difficult decisions you always call the management team for a meeting, you even ask for a teacher’s opinion, you can even ask a student for an opinion. But you will take the decision and you have to be able to support it, because you may face reactions. Therefore, you need to have courage to take decisions.” (Eutychia)

### ***Not getting anxious or nervous***

“Once I was calm in a situation I shouldn’t be. In my opinion one of the characteristics the school leader should possess is to be calm. Be calm when the problem arises, so as to handle it properly and take the right decisions [...] for example, if you acted with calm in a situation, the way you act is transferred with ease to the others, who then continue their work as usual. If you get anxious or nervous and you begin shouting, then you are creating trouble as well.” (Aristodemos)

“You might get upset because of a situation either with students or with parents or with the Ministry or with teachers. You should wear a mask, it might be not the right time to tell them your thoughts, and we will talk with them afterwards, is the time to think and take decisions [...] if you get anxious and nervous, then you can’t be a head.” (Eutychia)

### ***Be fair with people***

“It works like a model; you don’t just talk about justice and about proper ways of working and about relationships... because our mission is to build student’s personalities [...] To be fair you have to have values, and your actions should show who you are. How this will reveal? By the way you react and by the way you deal with the relations with teachers, and you should know that students observe these things. [...] Many times we act unfairly, afterwards we realise it, and this is good to admit that you made a mistake, it’s important.” (Aristodemos)

“Be fair doesn’t mean that you should do whatever they want so as to have them say you are fair, rather be fair means also to be hard with others [...] there are always boundaries and limits [...] you may come in a conflict with people [...] some might not like this, but we can’t have them all happy, since they know that you act fairly but you have limitations also, then they have to accept it.” (Apollonia)

### ***Be enthusiastic***

“Your enthusiasm is what it takes to convince them, besides from personality. If despite the problems you face you keep having a smile in your face, teachers sees that you try to solve a difficult issue with a positive way [...] You act with enthusiasm, giving suggestions: why not to try this, go on try and then evaluate... you can pass enthusiasm to others. [...] and be always positive. My glass is always half-full, never half-empty. We try to fill the glass. It is very important in our job.” (Aristodemos)

“Students are coming into my office to present their ideas regarding the science conference and we discuss... I like making them feel enthusiastic and then they want to do well.” (Apollonia)

### ***Face challenging circumstances efficiently***

“Dealing with challenging circumstances efficiently is a very important aspect of a successful school leadership, and if you can’t handle these issues yourself [...] you must create the procedures so as someone else from your management team deals with these; still, the head will have the responsibility [...] And is completely wrong to blame someone from the management team who was involved. Then s/he has lost the game. S/he has to back-up them... it’s a learning experience for everyone.” (Eutychia)

### ***Admit mistakes***

“I have apologised for my mistakes many times. Either for my behaviour either, in general, in handling a particular case with students. [...] Admitting your mistakes makes you a better leader, and people near you understand that their leader is a human person, not a superman. [...] It is important to admit our mistakes.” (Aristodemos)

### ***Be committed***

“How shall a leader react facing a crisis situation? If he is not committed in his mission, why should bother? But, why you applied for headship from first place? If not because you can deal with difficult problems [...] It is more than imperative to be dedicated to your vision, your cause for which you became a head.” (Herakleios)

### ***Face dilemma situations efficiently***

“In my long career I have faced many ethical dilemma situations; is a necessity that you must have answers before such situation arise. Of course, you should take into consideration your ethical standards, which you must not neglect. You should count every single consequence, all involved parties, but also what will get out in the



school or in the society. The press is acting with negative way in ethical issues, which is not a responsible stance. [...] There was a female student who was pregnant... is your duty to support the student, you must get closer so as to deal circumstances, you have to advise teachers and students, you need to talk to the parents and make clear that you are there to support, because we do not want to lose this student because of her pregnancy. Ethical dilemmas arise; you have to be careful of what you communicate, because there are always those who wait for a wrong word at the wrong moment. Your actions should be very cautious so as to make others feel uncomfortable, and you have to face everything [...] and have always in your mind the best interest of the students and the school.” (Eutychia)

## **Technical skills**

### ***Have communication skills***

“If you cannot communicate with your colleagues, teachers and students, then it is not possible to be a successful school leader. It is apparent that you need to be able to convince the teacher so as to follow a certain way of doing things so as to have good results. Surely, I need to have the ability to convince others [...] ability to communicate is a skill. Let’s give you an example. We might face a similar problem and someone else might have sent ten letters without result, and someone else just makes a call... but I must know to whom I shall attend, what I shall tell so as to achieve convincing and have the result on the same day, and the other head is been sending letters a whole month. This is a skill.” (Herakleios)

“Communicating is difficult, either in face or by the phone. It’s a multi-levelled procedure. For example, you might talk with a student for an issue and after a minute you have to talk the district inspector

for another issue. Administration comes to report something and asks for direction. A parent calls to complaint for something, and you have not to ignore the parent, you should give attention on the issue, promise that you will investigate and reply back with what you have discovered... all this is not an easy task. The school leader has to have developed communication skills and interpersonal relationship skills. [...] these are developed through experience.” (Eutychia)

### ***Be efficient with time management***

“Communicating with teachers, students and parents, these relationships take the most of your time. Then bureaucracy comes.” (Apollonia)

“To be successful you need to be manage well time, this is an element of success... I can’t waste three hours a day to talk with parents in my office, with the school board or with the cleaning staff. I surely need to dedicate time from my schedule, but I need to have time to visit classrooms during lessons, to talk with students, have a saying with a teacher, support a student... I just can’t waste three hours a day on the phone.” (Herakleios)

### ***Be able to delegate responsibilities and duties efficiently***

“You have to be able to delegate with efficiency responsibilities and duties to your colleagues and see that your colleagues respond at the degree you expected them to. You know your management team, you know that each one has her/his personality, you need to see this issue carefully, experience might help you delegate efficiently.” (Aristodemos)

“There are colleagues who are very capable and you trust them, you don’t need to test them, because you might make your deputies feel uncomfortable if you check them with every detail, then what I

assume is important is to delegate power to people who will manage to succeed the mission.” (Herakleios)

“There are deputies you can count on; you give them just a briefing and you know they understand... that they will act effectively and the job will be done perfectly. There are others who have to be given directions from ‘a’ to ‘z’; sometimes you have to hold them by the hand and be by their side all the way.” (Apollonia)

### ***Create change for improvement***

“We always have to manage change for improvement. I never want to do the same things I did last year. I must change that, because I understand that I have weaknesses [...] I would try to get better. [...] things I wasn’t sure before because of lack of experience or may be other weaknesses I have due to the training I had and throughout the years, and other priorities. So, managing change for improvement is necessary. We should never feel satisfied. [...] We can’t cope with change easily, but we are a living organisation and we try hard to follow.” (Aristodemos)

“We have to get improved all the time; if you have succeeded in one task, we will be glad, but we need to succeed in the other task as well because we might not do well on that. The school leader should create a culture of improvement between the teachers and the students. She will raise funds from the parents’ association, she will find that extra money needed to run some innovative programmes, she will organise and support the involved teachers, she will arrange several meetings and she will lead change for improvement.” (Eutychia)

### ***Listen to followers***

“We haven’t learnt how to listen. This is one of our major disadvantages [...] we often talk about the students, but we never talk

with the students, we are not listening to them [...] this happens everywhere. For example, during meetings everyone is prepared to express opinion and ideas, but they don't listen and may be someone else expressed the same just before, and during discussions each one is telling her/his story. If we put it in analogy to the society and we talk about politicians, then we understand that this is a major problem. Very few are those who listen to others' ideas." (Aristodemos)

### ***Manage public relations successfully***

"Every school leader should have the ability to deal successfully with public relations [...] should deal well with the local authorities, with the municipality, everyone with power, politicians [...] You could have difficulties from parents' association, from school board, from the police [...] it depends on the head, s/he should not allow anyone to think they can do whatever they like, there are limits; they have rights but up to a point. Example, parents do not have any saying in teaching [...] the school leader can be democratic, can be humane but at the same time the head should be the ultimate king of the school." (Herakleios)

### ***Be democratic***

"Democratic leadership does not give the right to others to do whatever they want. Act democratically leading a school means to listen carefully, to take seriously your colleagues. Leading with tact so as not to embarrass people around you [...] one day you might take decisions which they don't like or is against someone's interest, but you should take the decision. You can take decisions with your management team, but the most important decisions you will have to take them yourself. Be democratic means also to follow the regulations [...] be democratic, does not means to do whatever others are telling you." (Eutychia)

### ***Be people-oriented***

“I will be always a humane head. I have to take into consideration that you are pregnant, that you face a problem at home, the humane approach is not questionable, but is distinguished from be democratic [...] If you let anyone do whatever they like then you surely won't be effective, to be effective means to have control. I will still be humane, but I will tell you that today you didn't do your job well, but I will embrace you tomorrow.” (Herakleios)

### ***Be organised***

“You can be enthusiastic and at the same time be organised, there are issues that you should done by the book, whereas others which allow an enthusiasm. Let me give you an example. We had an event at school today which personally I wasn't happy about [...] because there wasn't any Christmas spirit nor it was something nice to offer to students or teachers. I felt that it was a carnival. [...] I believe that there was an organisational problem... the students did no mistake, it was us, we did the mistake, we had to check from before [...] we weren't organised [...] before I take the headship I witnessed seminars and gatherings, and I have told the management team that I won't do that kind of gatherings, I won't allow this, I won't gather the whole school together because you can't come close to six hundred students [...] I will pass from classrooms during lessons, I will talk to them in small groups, but I will not come in front of them telling them that they should not do this and that [...] I want to pass a culture [...] be organised.” (Apollonia)

### ***Be able to develop a school improvement plan***

“I believe that to be able to develop a school improvement plan is important. [...] It is more than important to make changes for improvement. Either regarding teaching or regarding students' relationships, regarding the school building; this is what we try to do.

[...] and you have to engage teachers and students [...] it creates a new climate, if students understand that we try to make things better for them they will adopt and act to improve.” (Apollonia)

***Be able to organise a school self-evaluation***

“We do an evaluation because we have tasks, and we always have to have tasks, and we should to come at the end to see whether we have accomplished these, are we there we hoped we would be? If we didn’t, why we didn’t? How shall we change that, how shall we improve? [...] it is an ongoing procedure not only at the end of the school year, but you should evaluate at any time, even for small things [...] if you don’t evaluate you don’t know what to improve, then you are not improved. [...] and you should admit mistakes, through these you improve.” (Apollonia)

## APPENDIX J

### ORIGIN OF PSEUDONYMS

PSEUDONYM	GENDER	STATUS
Isocrates	Male	Means "equal power", derived from <i>isos</i> = "equal" and <i>kratos</i> = "power"
Elpis	Female	Means "hope" in Greek
Kallias	Male	Derived from Greek <i>kallos</i> meaning "beauty"
Miltiades	Male	Derived from Greek <i>miltos</i> meaning "red earth"
Demosthenes	Male	Means "vigour of the people" from Greek <i>demou</i> = "of the people" and <i>sthenos</i> = "vigour, strength"
Chrysanthe	Female	Means "golden flower" from Greek <i>chrysos</i> "golden" combined with <i>anthos</i> "flower"
Nereus	Male	Derived from Greek <i>neros</i> meaning "water"
Eudoxia	Female	Means "good fame" from Greek <i>eu</i> = "good" and <i>doxa</i> = "fame, glory"
Aristodemos	Male	Derived from the Greek elements <i>aristos</i> = "best" and <i>demos</i> = "the people"
Herakleios	Male	Means "glory of Hera" from the name of the goddess HERA combined with Greek <i>kleos</i> = "glory"
Apollonia	Female	From Greek <i>Apollon</i> , the god of prophecy, medicine, music, art, law, beauty, wisdom, sun and light.
Eutychia	Female	Derived from the Greek elements <i>eu</i> = "good" and <i>tychi</i> = "luck"
Sappho	Female	From Greek <i>sappheiros</i> meaning "sapphire" or "lapis lazuli"
Philotheos	Male	Means "friend of god" from Greek <i>philos</i> = "lover, friend" and <i>theos</i> = "god"
Xanthe	Female	Derived from Greek <i>xanthos</i> meaning "fair hair"
Theodotus	Male	Means "given to god" from <i>theos</i> = "god" and <i>dotos</i> = "given"

<http://www.behindthename.com/names/usage/ancient-greek>